

Trends and Turning Points

Constructing the Late Antique
and Byzantine World

Edited by

Matthew Kinloch and Alex MacFarlane



BRILL

Trends and Turning Points

The Medieval Mediterranean

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The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0928-5520

ISBN 978-90-04-39573-2 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-39574-9 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

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Acknowledgements

This volume is the product of too many people's labour to produce a definitive list. However, as editors, we feel we must thank a few key people for their help with this process. First and foremost we are grateful to all the contributors for what they have produced, as well as their professionalism and patience during the process of selection and review.

The original conference, from which this volume arose, was made possible through the generous support of *The Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research*, *The Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity*, *The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies*, and *Ertegun House*. The conference was organised by and thanks to the other members of the executive committee of the *Oxford University Byzantine Society*, David Barritt, Joseph Dawson, and Sukanya Rai-Sharma, supported by the organising committee, Lynton Boshoff, Nicholas Evans, Alasdair Grant, Mirela Ivanova, Hugh Jeffrey, Max Lau, Nicholas Matheou, Jonas Nilsson, Wiktor Ostaz, Lucy Parker, Aleksander Paradzinski, and Kristina Terpoy.

We are also grateful to members of faculty at the University of Oxford who participated in a preliminary round of peer review, particularly Phil Booth, Averil Cameron, James Howard-Johnston, Catherine Holmes, Ine Jacobs, Marek Jancoviak, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Marc Lauxtermann, Jonathan Shepard, Ida Toth, and Bryan Ward-Perkins. In this, as in many other things, we are also indebted to Mark Whittow. Mark participated with his inimitable enthusiasm in this conference, as he had at countless graduate conferences before it. His presence and the hard work that he wore so casually made Byzantine studies in Oxford the sort of community that nourished activities like this. He is sorely missed.

Finally, we would like to thank Marcella Mulder, the series editors at Brill, and the anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive advice.

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PART 1

Scholarly Constructions



Constructing Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Introducing Trends and Turning Points

Matthew Kinloch

In 1204, the city of Constantinople fell to the pilgrims of what historians have traditionally called the fourth crusade. No moment of the late antique or Byzantine past could better illustrate how trends and turning points dominate the manner in which scholars have sought to first make sense of and then reconstruct that past. The capture of the city has been understood as a moment of dramatic change. A Roman emperor was replaced with a Frank, the Greek rite with Latin, and a single polity with many. With this moment, we are told, a period of dramatic anarchy and decline from the late 12th century reached its climax, just as that same trend towards decline continued until Byzantium's ultimate collapse with Constantinople's fall in 1453. With 1204, another narrative was also conceived, that of reconquest, which would also terminate in the dramatic fall of Constantinople, albeit this time to Romans in 1261.

In narratives about the late antique and Byzantine worlds, seemingly important events, such as the fall of Constantinople, are often described as turning points. They function as moments of change in the stories that both contemporaries and moderns tell about the past. Whether as beginnings, ends, catalysts, or stoppages, turning points are a common element of both scholarly descriptions and explanations of past happenings. Be it the death of an emperor, the composition of a work of literature, the construction of a building, or a battle, turning points constitute linguistic, narrative, and symbolic means of assigning meaning. At the other end of a wide spectrum of meaning allocation, trends have provided scholars with a means of both describing and explaining longer-term (often incremental) change. Christianisation, Turkification, expansion, growth, decline, and many other processes constitute examples of trends, by which scholars have categorised, ordered, and assigned meaning to great swathes of the past.

As can be seen from the example of 1204, trends and turning points are enmeshed together to create a framework within which scholars have told and interpreted the past. However, as sceptical (or not) as scholars of the late antique and Byzantine world may be of master narratives or epoch-transforming events, they still dominate both previous and contemporary scholarly output.

Cycles of revisionism and counter-revisionism come and go, but they are couched in these same frameworks of narration and explanation. The late Byzantine (or Palaiologan) world may have been reclaimed by some as a period of cultural boom, rather than military decline, and 1204 might be framed as a consequence of an increasingly interconnected Mediterranean, rather than as a great clash of opposing civilisations, but the structural apparatus by which meaning and significance has been judged remains the same, either single moments of dramatic action (turning points) or long-term transformations leading teleologically in a particular direction (trends). Actions, such as the diversion of the fourth crusade to Zara, the petition of the crusaders by Alexios IV Angelos, and the crusade's insufficient funding, are made meaningful because they led to the capture of Constantinople, which itself is made meaningful by the effect it had on other actions.

It is worth considering for a moment what exactly a trend or turning point might be, from a functional perspective. They are not first order information, that is data, but rather packages of information that have already been processed, interpreted, and placed within some kind of narrative schema. The fall of Constantinople, as it appears in modern scholarship, is made up of all the texts which purport to describe it and all the narratives in which those descriptions are embedded, mediated by all the decisions scholars have made about those texts and contexts. For all this complex mass of elements to be represented in four words, 'the fall of Constantinople', is impossible. What we have is a shorthand, a simplified and telescoped colligatory unit, which can be deployed within a narrative of its own, be it the end of a story of crusade, the beginning of a history of late Byzantium, or the midpoint of a narrative of church schism. 'The fall of Constantinople' is both more and less than the past happenings that scholars have sought to represent. 'The fall' contains narrativity, wholeness, teleology, eventness, and a range of other elements, absent from the past. Yet at the same time it lacks much that the past has, be it the details dismissed as irrelevant or the sheer contingency of action. Furthermore, 'the fall' of the modern historian cannot even reproduce 'the falls' of its sources, because the meanings with which each of its narrators, be they Geoffrey de Villehardouin, Niketas Choniates, or the anonymous narrator of the *Chronicle of Novgorod*, endowed their stories cannot be compiled into one without an exercise of power by the historian, who chooses what to keep and what to discard. 'The fall of Constantinople' is a thing that is made and constructed by historians, not a thing that exists out there to be found and related. The constructedness of such events, such turning points, suggests that they might more reasonably be described as concepts than events, since they are more or less thought

into being. The abstraction of the structures with which historians frame the Byzantine past is perhaps more obvious in the case of the less tangible trends, which complement these turning points. It is easier to notice that something as abstract-sounding as 'late Byzantine decline' or 'the age of insecurity' is not an objective description of facts out there in the past. However, it is still easy to overstate the naturalness of such constructs, perhaps with the aid of sequential maps of a shrinking purple Byzantium or a lamenting quotation from Niketas Choniates or George Pachymeres at their most melancholic.

Perhaps more importantly, it is also highly convenient to buy into such teleological schemas. By synthesising and making multiple, long, and complex texts meaningful, they allow scholars to get on with their own scholarship. The further away from a scholar's specific object of study the more willing they seem to be to accept such simplified constructions as trends and turning points. Thus trends and turning points are most likely to occur as either the products and conclusions of synthesising analysis or as the introductory framework into which such analysis is poured.

For all that the modern disciplines of late Antique and Byzantine studies have become increasingly open to theoretical concerns, the way we make the Byzantine past meaningful in the writing of it has yet to garner sustained attention. Thinking with Byzantium about theoretical questions of narrativity or the philosophy of historiography sometimes feels like a luxury we, as a discipline, have yet to earn, when so many texts remain unedited, let alone less than comprehensively analysed. However, whether we like it or not, these problems impact on our field. As scholars, we all make choices about where and how we allocate meaning to that which we study. It is not often that we state explicitly how we go about making them.

An interesting exception is the explicit theorising found in the introduction to Steven Runciman's three-volume history of the crusades. In his preface, after having modestly dismissed Herodotus and implicitly compared himself to Homer, he struck out at what he called 'History-writing to-day' and in so doing set out his own criteria for meaning and significance.

History-writing to-day has passed into an Alexandrian age, where criticism has overpowered creation. Faced with the mountainous heap of minutiae of knowledge and awed by the watchful severity of *his* colleagues, the modern historian too often takes refuge in learned articles or narrowly specialized dissertations, small fortresses that are easy to defend from attack. *His* work may be of the highest value; but is not an end in itself. I believe that the supreme duty of the historian is to write history,

that is to say, to attempt to record in one sweeping sequence the greater events and movements that have swayed the destinies of *man*.¹

Today, academia seems to be firmly ensconced in Runciman's Alexandrian age, especially if the quasi-scholarly works of celebrity academics, of whom Runciman himself was something of a forerunner, are excluded. His observations on the culture of academic production and publication appear prescient. However, they sit alongside much that has dated less well. Most notably his assumption that 'the modern historian' could only possibly be a man. As with the sexist assumptions that are so visible in this passage and so often invisible (if structurally persistent) in more recent historiography, Runciman's assumptions about what historiography should be are explicitly on display. For him, 'the greater events and movements that have swayed the destinies of man', which might be understood as trends and turning points, are not just his object of study, but 'the supreme duty of the [male] historian'. Truly valuable scholarly endeavour, in Runciman's understanding, must aggregate up to something larger and more meaningful. It is no surprise then that his history is elite, male, and as martial as his academic metaphors. However, despite all this, for Runciman, historiographical 'creation' is not an inconvenient truth, but both his objective and method, which he contrasts to mere 'criticism'. Constructivism, in the philosophical sense, has yet to gain much influence in the field of Byzantine studies, nor does it seem likely to in the future. Runciman's romanticism should not be confused with any proto-postmodern impulse, but all the same his foregrounding of 'creation' seems to be as good a place to start rethinking our scholarly project(s) as any other and it certainly is time to rethink the products and processes of historiographical (and other scholarly) construction.

Rereading Runciman's classic preface begs a number of questions which dovetail with the topic of this volume. What is and is not 'an end in itself', what are we creating, and how are we doing it? Primarily we, like Runciman, construct meaning for ourselves, according to our own criteria, whether we make them explicit or not. Yet in contemporary academia there is an increasing pressure to impose meaning on that which we study, not only for ourselves, but for employers, funding bodies, and as Runciman mentioned, for our colleagues. This pressure reveals just how flexible meaning is. It depends on our goals, our audience, and the story we are trying to tell. Given this, there can be no objective criteria for meaning, and thus no objective criteria for the construction of trends or turning points. But is this fundamentally a problem? Do we need to find an alternative model to describe the late antique and Byzantine

1 Steven Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1951), 1:xiii. Emphasis added.

past? One which does not require the simplification of the past into trends or turning points, nor the subjective imposition of meaning and significance in accordance with some colligatory narrative schema. Without these elements, can we still make our work 'relevant' and contextualise it?

The principal concern of this volume is to think with trends and turning points, while engaging with, both specific problems with and the constructed nature of, the late Antique and Byzantine past. Given his view of collaborative historiography, it seems unlikely that Runciman would have been very impressed by our efforts.

It may seem unwise for one British pen to compete with the massed typewriters of the United States. But in fact there is no competition. A single author cannot speak with the high authority of a panel of experts, but *he* may succeed in giving to *his* work an integrated and even an epical quality that no composite volume can achieve. Homer as well as Herodotus was a Father of History, as Gibbon, the greatest of our historians, was aware...²

In the current volume, we make no pretensions to any epical quality. However, together we offer a platform for alternative ways of approaching a wide range of periods, materials, and problems. The 'creation' of which Runciman was such a proponent is not just a question of style and literariness, to be dismissed, but of structuring practices embedded within scholarship of all sorts. Byzantine studies does not need a Homer, a Herodotus, a Gibbon, or a Runciman to tell us 'what happened'. It is less clear what Byzantine studies does need, but we believe that a diverse mix of scholars, prepared to listen as well as to tell, and to collaborate as well as to strike out alone, might not be a bad place to start.

The starting point of this volume is the observation that late antique and Byzantine pasts are always constructed, often out of trends and turning points. The contributions in this book are divided into four sections: *Scholarly Constructions*, *Literary Trends*, *Constructing Politics*, and *Turning Points in Religious Landscapes*. Each cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries and periodisation, placing historical, archaeological, literary, and architectural concerns in discourse, whilst drawing on examples from (as well as beyond) the full range of the medieval Roman past. While its individual articles individually offer solutions to numerous specific problems, together the volume collectively re-thinks fundamental assumptions about how late antique and Byzantine studies has and continues to be discursively constructed.

² Runciman, *Crusades*, 1:xii–xiii. Emphasis added.

The first section (*Scholarly Constructions*) of this volume, which includes this introduction, offers an explicitly self-reflexive consideration of how scholars of the late antique and Byzantine world have gone about constructing the past. In the first paper, Francesco Lovino starts by reflecting on the construction both of Byzantium and of Byzantine studies itself. Taking as his focus the seminal Czechoslovakian journal *Seminarium Kondakovianum* (1927–1938), Lovino demonstrates just what the careful study of the intellectual and physical context of modern scholarship offers the discipline. As he shows, Russian émigré intellectuals constructed, in Czechoslovakia, a rival Byzantinism to that dominant in Stalin's Russia. Rebelling against the subsummation of Byzantine studies into a discourse of Russian national identity, scholars utilised Eurasianism to push the focus of scholarship East, decentre the Mediterranean and Europe, and challenge the arbitrary dichotomies of East and West. Lovino's paper serves as a timely reminder that the Byzantine past cannot be extricated from the context in which it is constructed. In a discipline where a self-conscious reception studies is still struggling to form itself, Lovino has ensured that central European scholarship will not be ignored, as it so often is in Anglophone Byzantine studies.

The second section of the volume (*Literary Trends*) focuses on trends in Eastern Roman literature. In it, contributors consider how the Byzantines themselves (as well as modern scholars) constructed texts. Together, these studies reveal the double bind in which modern scholars find themselves, trapped between the constructed quality of both the sources and creations of their study. Laura Borghetti opens this section by reanalysing the femininity and iconodule philosophy which underpin the Cassia constructed by scholars from her *Hymns*. The role of the Cross in the female saint's *passio* threatens to undermine the basic assumption of the author's alleged iconodule faith. As she shows, far from being a simple *magical object*, the Cross can be considered as a proper $\alpha\lambda\eta\gamma\mu\alpha$ of Christ's presence alongside the holy woman. Through a careful analysis of text and narrative structures, Borghetti raises questions regarding the basic assumptions of scholars regarding their own Cassia and the Cassia that we actually find in the text. She is joined in rethinking the assumptions which underpin famous characters of Byzantine literature by Valeria Flavia Lovato, whose study also finds parallels with that of Lovino, since her focus is on the reception and construction of the past. Her elucidation of scholarly debate during the 12th century, in the work of the exegetes Eustathius of Thessaloniki and John Tzetzes, focuses on the reception of a debate already present in Homeric poetry as to who was the best of the Achaeans. Lovato reveals a heated debate revolving around the epithet *ptoliporthos* ('city-sacker') that Homer often ascribes to Odysseus. In demonstrating Tzetzes' deliberate

reconstruction of traditional Homeric narratives and reading his argument in discourse with Eustathius's commentaries, Lovato dismisses the passivity with which scholars used to treat these authors and goes further to reveal their active engagements with both contemporary literary debates and the classical past.

In the same section, Nikolas Churik and Milan Vukašinić offer radical reassessments of traditional generic designations, respectively, the *metaphrasis* and the letter. On the one hand, Churik explores the transformation of meaning between the metaphrases of the Hellenistic and Palaiologan periods, which are so often examined only in a Byzantine context. His reanalysis of syntax and semantics, in the metaphrases of the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena, the *Basilikos Andrias* of Nikephoros Blemmydes, and the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates, demonstrates that certain characteristics are present across genres, even as the goals of the translator changed, from the 5th through 13th centuries. In so doing he critiques the assumption that there was a unique turning point in the metaphrastic tradition during the Palaiologan period, preferring instead to understand transformation as a more gradual trend. Vukašinić, on the other hand, deconstructs the very notion of documentary evidence in his analysis of the relationship between letters constructed as literary and documentary, in the context of 13th-century Serbian and Epirot historiography. By utilising several narratological tools and speech act theory, he demonstrates that the letters embedded in Serbian hagiographic narrative texts cannot be so easily divorced from supposedly 'real' letters. Ignoring unhelpful questions regarding the relative or absolute historicity of letters, Vukašinić problematises the approach of late Byzantine and medieval Serbian historians to their 'source material'.

Concluding this section with a paper exploring George Pachymeres' *Historia*, Maria Rukavichnikova examines how a historical narrative of fundamental importance to the historiography of the late Byzantine world has been constructed. She demonstrates that the author's playful interpretation and utilisation of classical ironic forms is central to the text and furthermore is central to the character of Michael Palaiologos as created by Pachymeres. She argues that Pachymeres reinterpreted the *eiron-alazon* model from classical drama and then utilised his new version as a key pillar of his work. Such a reading dramatically transforms approaches to both the whole work and specific characters, such as Michael, whose presentation cannot be read without understanding that he plays the role of *eiron* in classical drama.

In the third section of the volume (*Constructing Politics*), contributors have reconsidered historiographical orthodoxies in the political sphere. Each author takes as their subject moments that have been framed as turning points

in late antique and Byzantine historiography. While the papers range over the full breadth of the period, they repeatedly converge on similar problems in both their textual evidence and the approaches of previous scholarship. Their reconsiderations draw on very different methodological and theoretical approaches, from traditional close readings to mobilisation theory of crisis management. However, they share a tendency to contextualise and complicate accepted constructions. Taking the disintegration of the (west) Roman state in the 5th century as his subject, David Barritt reassesses the construction of papal power during this traditional turning point in historiography. Dismantling arguments that the papacy derived its authority through the framework of traditional Roman law, he demonstrates that Leo I (440–61) moved away from legalistic modes of legitimation and sought to place the pope outside legalistic structures and instead derive authority directly through his special spiritual connection with Saint Peter. Theresia Raum's contribution concentrates on the 30-year period at the start of Byzantium's so-called dark age (610–41), which is so often conceived of as a momentous turning point in Byzantine historiography. In her powerful study, she reinterprets the radical response of the emperor Heraclius to the stresses placed on both the Byzantine empire and its society during this period. Raum places her response to what she describes as the discourse of threat, found in source material such as the works of George of Pisidia, in the context of the response of individuals within societies under stress. Instead of aggregating all agency to Heraclius and subordinating all transformation to his personal characteristics, she utilises social scientific theory to place Heraclius firmly in his socio-political context. Thus, she generates a more complex and multidirectional picture of the societal transformation that made Heraclius the first emperor to leave Constantinople on campaign since the late 5th century.

Kosuke Nakada's contribution, like that of Raum, decentres the historiography of a commonly assumed turning point, namely the 10th- and 11th-century expansion of Byzantine territory into the Transcaucasus. The Caucasian sections of the *De Administrando Imperio* have been taken as evidence of a planned and centralised Imperial doctrine of eastern expansion. However, Nakada refocuses on the autonomous rulers of the Caucasus and field commanders. In so doing, he replaces a top-down and centralising vision of both the text of the *De Administrando Imperio* and of Byzantine power with a reading of the text that highlights rather than covers up its limitations as a source and a more complex and multi-directional set of power dynamics. In showing how a highly normative imperial text from Constantinople has constructed the history of the eastern 'periphery', Nakada's contribution mirrors that of Mirela Ivanova, who deals with the opposite problem. Instead of the Caucasus

as constructed from imperial Constantinopolitan texts, she rethinks how 'native' epigraphy has been used to construct earlier medieval Bulgarian history (c.700–850). Since inscriptions provide the only native sources for the reconstruction of the early Bulgarian polity, historians have been keen to use them to reconstruct solid chronological trends of progress and growth. By reconsidering the Madara Horseman, traditionally considered the earliest 'Bulgarian' monument, and the so-called 'Triumphal Inscriptions' of Krum (c.803–14), Ivanova demonstrates that these inscriptions cannot be read as floating factual evidence. Like Raum and Nakada, Ivanova stresses the situatedness of both the textual evidence and the society in which it was produced and interpreted. Given that her material is epigraphic, this means a focus on the materiality of these objects, as well as how they might have been viewed by specific audiences. The result is the powerful argument that these early inscriptions have played and continue to play an important role in not just recording but constructing early medieval Bulgarian history.

Jonas Nilsson picks up on many of the themes that have developed throughout the third section of this volume. Again, he challenges a historiographical orthodoxy, regarding the intensification of religious persecution during a moment that has been framed as a turning point, namely the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118). While this intensification has generally been portrayed as a top-down imperial attempt to destroy opposition to Alexios, Nilsson's careful rereading of the evidence for this historiographical construction reveals, once more, a more complex picture. Taking an oration delivered in 1091 by John the Oxite, titular patriarch of Antioch, he argues that Alexios was not seeking to silence his critics, but rather to win their support. When placed within the framework of complex and multidirectional societal dynamics, Nilsson generates an alternative Alexios. An Alexios whose recourse to the traditionalism of the emperor's role as champion of orthodoxy and his construction of a penitential programme was not an attempt to negotiate support. This analysis contradicts the assumption of comparability with a western model of religious persecution, since it highlights the role of a specific moment of military threat and the direct appeal to pre-existing non-state power structures, rather than the suppression of alternatives to state power.

The fourth and final section (*Turning Points in Religious Landscapes*) incorporates a wider variety of evidence than the rest of the volume. In so doing, it opens up a sustained critique of scholarly constructions in the fields of material culture, archaeology, and the built environment, alongside evidence provided by texts. The final four papers of the volume highlight trends and turning points at a variety of spatial and temporal scales, drawing out commonalities in scholarly approaches to constructing both historiography and

a highly religious society. Hugh Jeffrey starts the section by tracing the cult of the archangels Michael and Gabriel in Aphrodisias/Stauropolis from the 5th to the late 12th century. His study thinks carefully about how scholars have constructed meaning from archaeological evidence. First, he reconsiders the apparent turning point in the Christianisation of the city. The conversion of the temple of Aphrodite into a large cathedral has previously been presented as the climax of a violent struggle between pagans and Christians. Instead, Jeffrey understands it as the expression of the Metropolitan bishop's ongoing attempts to control the vernacular cult of ἄγγελοι (angels). Second, he traces the cult of ἄγγελοι beyond the destructions of the 7th century, which led to the abandonment of that same cathedral. In so doing, he refuses the urge to fit archaeological evidence into the frameworks provided by texts or the expectations of classicists regarding a magnificent antique city. The result is nothing less than the construction of a new temporal frame for the study of Aphrodisias/Stauropolis. Stephen Humphreys' contribution similarly touches on the complex role of bishops in civic life between the 4th and 7th centuries. After laying out the evidence of crosses in cisterns and other water installations in Byzantine Palestine, Humphreys suggests that these crosses were intended as a means of guarding against the contamination of water. His arguments thus contradict scholarly assumptions about Palestinian monasticism and ecclesiastical ownership, while illuminating Christian attitudes to a key resource.

In the penultimate paper of the volume, Alasdair Grant compares various accounts of the two translations of the relics of St Nicholas at the end of the 11th century. While scholarship has favoured the three accounts of the first translation of the relics to Bari, Grant seeks to emphasise the fourth and often underappreciated account of the relics' translation to Venice. Through careful comparative textual analysis of the traditions of the two translations, he creates a platform to discuss the prevailing trend of the late 11th century transformation, which saw the collapse of Byzantine Anatolia catalyse both Turkic and Latin (especially Italian) Christian impingement on and then expansion into Byzantine space. One of Grant's most important contributions is placing these translations in the context of Venetian participation in the first crusade, a symbolic turning point in modern narratives of this Latin Christian impingement. The final contribution to the volume, by Elif Demirtiken, fills a vacuum in the study of monastic patronage in late Byzantine Constantinople carved out by the historiographical constructions with which I began this introduction. The dramatic turning point of the fall of Constantinople in 1204 has formed the terminus for most studies. Consequently, Demirtiken's unconventional period of focus (c.1080–1340) allows her to place the founders of the Theotokos Pammakaristos monastery in the context of the considerable amount of available

evidence. Demirtiken draws out trends in patronage, which she understands as the 'materialized representations of unequal relationships between the founder and the audience/viewer', of both continuity and transformation. The results of her study demonstrate an important change in the profile of patrons. By the 14th century, the Komnenian norms, which saw only those very closely associated with the imperial family as monastic patrons, had loosened to allow an increasingly diverse range of patrons, especially women and those less closely associated with the imperial family.

Scholars have found trends and turning points useful because they classify, simplify, and give meaning to that which we study. They fit the incoherent and anarchic mess of the past into structured frameworks that can be used to describe and explain them, allow meaning to be imposed on the past, and even allow us to fit our own academic narratives into the mainstream of late antique and Byzantine studies. For these reasons, they are highly problematic, but they are also a useful place to start if we want to reassess disciplinary assumptions. It would be easy to explain and deconstruct the terminology of trends and turning points, but it is more important to understand the function they fulfil and in so doing reconsider the constructed nature and the constructive process of these framing elements in the scholarship of the late antique and Byzantine world. The early career scholars who contributed to this volume offer the potential for a new trend towards increasing reflexivity in Byzantine studies. However, this collection is merely a contribution and can only become a disciplinary turning point if its readers decide to make it one.

Constructing the Past through the Present: The Eurasian View of Byzantium in the Pages of *Seminarium Kondakovianum*

Francesco Lovino

In this essay I will explore to what degree Eurasian thought resonates in the development of Byzantine studies during the 1920s and 1930s.¹ I will particularly focus on the emblematic case of *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, founded by a community of Russian émigré scholars in Prague, and how the involvement in the Eurasian movement forged the view of Byzantium proposed in its issues. This experience marked a new trend in the history of the discipline, awareness of which seems completely neglected by contemporary academia. This is not surprising: after all, if “the biography of a scholar is, above all, the history of his ideas”;² the twofold combination of Eurasianism and emigrations represented a unique moment in the cultural history of the 20th century.

1 What We Talk About When We Talk About Eurasianism

In 1926, the economist Petr B. Struve (1870–1944) organized a congress in Paris, where he lived after a few years spent in Sofia. Struve’s goal – other than presenting his new journal *Vozroždenie* [Renaissance] – was to gather together the Russian émigré intellectual community, and to make sense of their rootless condition. The earlier hope of a rapid return to the homeland had been replaced, by then, with the pragmatic conclusion that the Bolshevik regime was not going to end soon: the symbolist writer Dmitrij S. Merežkovskij (1866–1941) argued that the emigration had to be intended as a new pathway to Russia, that is to rediscover the true identity of their homeland. In his opinion,

1 I am grateful to Klára Benešová, Ivan Foletti and Karolina Foletti, as well as to the peer-reviewers, for their comments and observations on the article. Any shortcomings remain my sole responsibility.

2 Sergej Petkhunov, “Nikodim Kondakov. Arkhistratig russkoj isstorii iskustva” [Nikodim Kondakov. Arcistrategist of the history of Russian art], in *Dom v Izgnanii. Očerki o russkoj emirgacii v Českoslovakii 1918–1945* (Prague, 2008), p. 89.

they were not facing an emigration of Russians, but an emigration of Russia itself. As for the Jewish diaspora in Egypt, Russia had to be re-established outside its natural borders.³

Thus, in order to avoid any sort of cultural absorption, Russian émigré intellectuals were forced to ask questions about their identity, especially in relation to Europe. In this shifting and unstable context, the only original ideology that appeared in these years was Eurasianism. This formally emerged in 1921, when a collection of essays, *Ishod k Vostoku: predčuvstvija i sveršenija* [Exodus to the East: Forebodings and Achievements],⁴ was published in Sofia, although actually Eurasianism's genesis dated back to the last decades of the 19th century, when a growing number of Russian intellectuals took an interest in the notion of the Orient and the need to define Russia's place in the world. This theme interested people in all fields of the humanities, from history to geography, literature to art. As stated by Marlène Laruelle, "l'eurasisme (...) est une pensée totale, englobante, qui veut résoudre définitivement les interrogations qui les intellectuels russes ont sur leur identité".⁵ The theoretical concept of Eurasianism propounded the uniqueness of Russia – that is, completely overlapping Eurasia⁶ – creating a third continent composed of "the oriental part of Europe and the northern part of Asia".⁷ Moving from this premise, Eurasians argued that this peculiar geography determined the development of Eurasia in its historical, linguistic, political, and religious aspects.

In this context, the pivotal role that Eurasians gave to the Mongol yoke in the development of Russian history is not surprising. Among the intellectuals who joined Struve's congress in Paris, and who also contributed to *Ishod k Vostoku*, there was the historian Georgij V. Vernadskij. Vernadskij was Eurasian *avant le mot*: he had studied and published articles about the Mongol rulers since 1913, arguing an immediate reflection between Eurasia and the territories occupied by Genghis Khan and his population at the dawn of the 13th century.⁸

3 On this, see: Marlène Laruelle, *L'Idéologie eurasiste russe ou comment penser l'empire* (Paris, 1999), p. 58.

4 On the impact of this volume, see the pivotal article by Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "The Emergence of Eurasianism", *California Slavic Studies* 4 (1967), 39–72.

5 Laruelle, *L'Idéologie eurasiste*, p. 19.

6 Vernadskij wrote that "There is only one Russia, 'Eurasian' Russia, or Eurasia". Georgij Vernadskij, *A History of Russia* (New Haven, 1929), p. 4.

7 Georgij Vernadskij, *Opyt istorii Evrazii* [Essay on the history of Eurasia] (Berlin, 1934), p. 5.

8 Georgij Vernadskij, "O dviženii russkikh na vostok" [On the motion of Russia to East], *Naučnyj istoričeskij žurnal* 1/2 (1913), 52–61. Vernadskij in these years published two additional articles on this topic, the conclusions of which are enlightening in view of his later research: Idem, "Protiv solnca. Rasprostranenie russkogo gosudarstva k vostoku" [Against the sun. The spread of the Russian state to the east], *Russkaia mysl'* 35/1 (1914), 56–79; Idem, "Gosudarevy služilye

According to the historian, the Mongols' intervention dealt with both geographic and political aspects. On one side, Mongols "showed" the steppe to Russia, decisively shaping the Russian national character: Vernadskij argued that the nature of Russia perforce changed as the Russians moved eastward. On the other, the Mongol empire was a universal one that represented a specimen of the modern Russian empire – and, reflectively, of the Byzantine empire. In Eurasians' view, in fact, all these three empires were poles of civilization, able to unify different cultures under their administration and to connect the eastern and the western parts of the world. Vernadskij even traced a parentage through ancient Rome, Byzantium, and the Mongol empires, explaining *de facto* the idea of Moscow as the "third Rome" not only as a religious filiation, but also as a geopolitical one (that should also include Ulaanbaatar):

The role of Rome and Byzantium was to unify the cultures of West and East, the maritime and agricole cultures with that of the nomadic populations of the steppe, and this role, at the beginning of the XIII century, after the fall of the Byzantine empire, was delivered to the Mongol empire.⁹

The impact of Eurasianism among the discouraged circles of Russian emigration was noteworthy: dozens of reviews and seminars were founded and functioned in the émigré cities, from Paris to Prague, Berlin to Belgrade, and even in Harbin, the Manchurian city that in the 1920s hosted the largest Russian population outside Soviet borders.¹⁰ The appeal and force of Eurasianism was well-described by prince Dmitrij P. Svjatopolk-Mirskij. The literary critic wrote in 1927:

Russian intellectuals of the older generation stick to their old political pigeon-holes, and the utmost they can do is to migrate from one old pigeon-hole to another. The only effect of the Revolution on the whole

i promyšlennye ljudi v Vostočnoj Sibiri XVII v". [Royal army and merchants in Eastern Siberia during XVII century], *Ministerstvo Narodnogo Prosveščeniya Zhurnal* 55/ 4 (1915), 332–54. On Vernadskij's research about the Mongol yoke, see: Charles J. Halperin, "George Vernadsky, Eurasianism, the Mongols, and Russia", *Slavic Review* 41/3 (1982), 477–93; Idem, "Russia and the Steppe: George Vernadsky and Eurasianism", *Forschungen zur Osteuropaischen Geschichte* 36 (1985), 55–194.

9 Georgij Vernadskij, "Mongol'skoe igo v russkoj istorii" [The Mongol yoke in Russian history], *EvrAzijskaja hronika* 5 (1926), 157.

10 During the 1920s, approximately 130,000 Russians lived in Harbin. Olga M. Mikhailovna, "Emigre Identity: The Case of Harbin", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99/1 (2000), 51–73.

political pigeonry has been to deplete the middle pigeon-holes in favour of the extreme ones. (...) The duty of revising the Russian intellectuals' stock of political and historical ideas has hitherto been realised by only one group of men – the Eurasians.¹¹

2 Georgij Vernadskij and Nikodim Kondakov: Eurasianism meets Byzantium

Georgij Vernadskij was the scion of a scholarly family: his grandfather taught political economy at the University of Kiev, while his father Vladimir I. was a famous geologist, professor at Moscow University and had been a member of the Russian Academy of Science since 1912.¹² Differently from his father, who after the Bolshevik Revolution remained in Moscow,¹³ Georgij joined the counter-revolutionary unit of the baron Pëtr N. Vrangeli' in Crimea, and after the mass evacuation of the autumn of 1920 he resided first in Constantinople, then in Athens, and finally arrived in Prague in 1922, where he was appointed professor of the newly established Law Faculty of the Russian University.¹⁴

A similar trajectory was undertaken by the Russian art historian Nikodim P. Kondakov, who reached Prague in the spring of 1922 at the age of 78. The Czech capital was the final destination of a two-year-long peregrination: leaving Odessa toward Constantinople in February 1920, Kondakov spent a few days on the Bosphorus, where only due to his *Légion d'honneur*, the scholar

11 Mentioned in: Elena Chynayeva, *Russians outside Russia: The Émigré Community in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938* (Munich, 2008), p. 190.

12 In 1918 Vladimir I. Vernadskij also founded the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. On his life and works, see: Kendall E. Bailes, *Science and Russian Culture in the Age of Revolutions: V.I. Vernadsky and His Scientific School, 1863–1945* (Bloomington, 1990); Andrei V. Lapo, “Vladimir I. Vernadsky (1863–1945), Founder of the Biosphere Concept”, *International Microbiology* 4 (2001), 47–9. For further information about the relationship between father and son, who had the occasion to meet again in the 1920s and the 1930s, see: Igor Torbakov, “Rethinking the Nation: Imperial Collapse, Eurasianism, and George Vernadsky's Historical Scholarship”, *Kennan Institute Occasional Papers* 302 (2008), 7–8.

13 Nevertheless, father and son had similar political beliefs: before the Revolution, Vladimir was active in the Constitutional Democratic Party, and when in the late 1920s the Communist Party tried to reform the Russian Academy of Science by adding new members loyal to the government, he became the leader of the opposition. On this, see Loren R. Graham, *The Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Communist Party, 1927–1932* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 89–104. In 1945, Vladimir Vernadskij would eventually win the Stalin Prize in the field of science: Bailes, *Science and Russian Culture*, p. 166.

14 Torbakov, “Rethinking the Nation”, p. 6; Francesco Lovino, “Communism vs. Seminarium Kondakovianum”, *Convivium* 4/1 (2017), 25.

avoided the humiliating sanitization ordered by the authorities for all the Russian refugees.¹⁵ After two years in Sofia,¹⁶ Kondakov accepted the invitation of Jiří Polívka and Lubor Niederle, two of the prominent Czech art historians at the time, and joined the Charles University, where he was appointed professor of Byzantine and East Slavonic art and in 1924 was awarded an *honoris causa* degree.¹⁷

The presence of Kondakov and Vernadskij in Prague fell within the objectives to gather together 70 Russian émigré professors, called upon to educate a generation of Russian émigré students in all fields of the humanities: the diamond point of the *Ruská Akce*, a policy specifically addressed to Russian refugees of the highest level. Czechoslovakia's attitude toward Russian refugees and the Soviet Union was determined by the view of its President, Tomáš G. Masaryk (1850–1937). Masaryk was a great expert on Russia, and after spending almost a year there in 1917,¹⁸ he developed the idea that the Bolsheviks would keep power for a longer period than their adversaries typically assumed, and that the forces trying to restore monarchy in Russia were hopeless in their efforts.¹⁹ Masaryk and his colleague Edvard Beneš, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, believed that the violence and the brutality of the Bolshevik regime could be softened only by the development of a commercial relationship between the USSR and the rest of the world. To reach this goal, Czechoslovakia had to act as a bridge between west and east, as suggested in 1919 by Jaroslav Preiss,

15 The sanitization process established by the authorities consisted of a lukewarm shower, after being stripped and walked naked through the dock on the Golden Horn. Then, the Russian refugees were confined for a period of quarantine. See Ivan Foletti, *Da Bisanzio alla Santa Russia: Nikodim Kondakov (1844–1925) e la nascita della storia dell'arte in Russia* (Rome, 2011), p. 70.

16 Unlike in Constantinople, in Sofia, Kondakov was received with great honor: Ljubomir Miletič and Boris Tsonev offered him teaching at the University of Sofia, and Kondakov was also invited to lunch with the tsar Boris III of Bulgaria. Nevertheless, the old scholar soon complained about the humid weather and the awful quality of the libraries in Sofia, and already in 1921 he had started planning a new relocation. See Foletti, *Da Bisanzio alla Santa Russia*, pp. 71–3.

17 Georgij Vernadskij, “Nikodim Pavlovič Kondakov”, in *Recueil d'études, dédiées à la mémoire de N.P. Kondakov. Archéologie. Histoire de l'art. Etudes byzantines* (Prague, 1926), pp. XXVI–XXX.

18 Masaryk had already been in Russia in 1887 and 1890.

19 Masaryk wrote a memorandum on Russia for the US government in April 1918, suggesting that the Allies should have recognized the new-born Soviet Union *de facto*. On this, see: Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler: The Diplomacy of Edvard Beneš in the 1930s* (New York / Oxford, 1996), p. 11.

a member of the conservative National Democratic party.²⁰ The plan developed by the government in Prague forecast building the ruling class that would drive Russia outside the communist regime: so Czechoslovakia started to financially support the studies of the Russian émigré community,²¹ and also established a Russian University, which was expected to offer courses in all humanities;²² in 1923, even a Russian People's University was opened in Prague, with the aim of giving popular lectures on a variety of subjects.

Kondakov especially was the ace of the 70 Russian professors hired by the Czechoslovakian government. He was among the patriarchs of Byzantine studies: the venerable art historian reached this investiture during the first international congress of Byzantine studies, held in Bucharest in April 1924. There, Kondakov was received with great honors: Henri Grégoire speaks of "frémissement d'émotion et un véritable mouvement d'enthousiasme",²³ murmurs of emotions and true enthusiasm among the audience, while the proceedings of the conference report the opinion of the Greek scholar Socrates Kougeas, who chaired the session in which Kondakov presented his paper:

Le président exprime à M. Kondakov la reconnaissance du congrès pour cette communication qui a été plutôt une magistrale conférence faisant revivre sous nos yeux la cour byzantine. Il n'ajoute aucun éloge, M. Kondakov étant depuis longtemps de ces hommes envers lesquels on ne peut éprouver que de la reconnaissance, toujours de la reconnaissance.²⁴

During the Congress of Bucharest, in the spirit of this unanimous recognition, the participants also decided to dedicate in his honour the first issue of a newly established journal, the Belgian *Byzantion*. Appearing a few months later, the review opened with a biography of Kondakov by Jean Ebersolt²⁵ and an article

20 Zdeněk Sládek, "Československá politika a Rusko, 1918–1920", *Československý časopis historický* 16/6 (1968), p. 865.

21 At the beginning of 1922, with among c.16,000 Russians living in Czechoslovakia, the Ruská Akce was able to financially support the academic studies of more than 20% of them, c.3,300 émigrés. Chinyaeva, *Russians outside Russia*, pp. 57–61.

22 Unfortunately, only the Law Faculty was eventually able to furnish a complete university education. Chinyaeva, *Russians outside Russia*, p. 58.

23 Henri Grégoire, "Le Congrès Byzantin de Bucarest", *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 18 July 1924.

24 Constantin Marinescu, *Compte-rendu du premier Congrès international des études byzantines: Bucarest 1924* (Bucharest, 1925), p. 45.

25 Jean Ebersolt, "M. Nicodime Pavlovitch Kondakov", *Byzantion* 1 (1924), pp. 1–6.

by Kondakov himself, “Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine”.²⁶ In this seminal work, Kondakov attempted to define the nature and the origin of the *skaramangion*, a belted tunic with long full sleeves that first appeared in Theophanes the Confessor’s *Chronographia* as a Persian military garment. Often mentioned in the 10th-century *De Cerimoniis*, the *skaramangion* was the most popular vestment at the court of Constantinople, even if it was not attributed to a specific rank of the Byzantine hierarchy.²⁷

Kondakov argued that if at first Byzantium was the educator of the nomadic populations that would later settle in Eastern Europe, its role gradually changed and this also affected Constantinople and its court:

<Byzance> introduisait chez elle des Barbares à la fois pour mieux combattre d’autres Barbares, et pour se rapprocher des populations naguère hostiles, qui, plus ou moins affaiblies, venaient chercher la paix et la tranquillité sous la protection, ou avec l’assentiment de l’Empire d’Orient et des États qui étaient ses clients ou ses vassaux.²⁸

This fluid situation is exemplified by the *skaramangion*: applying his well-known “iconographic method”,²⁹ Kondakov retraced its origins as an equipment of the Persian cavalry, and then analyzed how this vestment was spread all around the world, eastward and westward. In doing so, Kondakov showed a great amount of examples, connected to the Cathedral of Bamberg as well as the Mongolian Khan, and especially to the Russian environment, as demonstrated by statuettes of men wearing a belted and short tunic excavated in Siberia, in South Russia, and in the Caucasus. The scholar even mentioned

26 Nikodim Kondakov, “Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine”, *Byzantion* 1 (1924), 7–49. Kondakov had held a public lecture in French on the same topic for the Kruh pro péstování dějin umění [Friends of History of Art], on 23 November 1923; Vernadskij, “Nikodim Pavlovič Kondakov”, p. XXVIII.

27 Ibidem, pp. 11–3. A further overview about the *skaramangion* in: Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th – 15th Centuries)* (Leiden, 2003), 61; Timothy Dawson, “Oriental Costumes at the Byzantine Court: A Reassessment”, *Byzantion* 76 (2006), 97–114.

28 Kondakov, “Les costumes”, p. 8.

29 Irina Kyzlasova, *Istorija izučénja vizantijskogo i drevnerusskogo iskusstva v Rossii. F.I. Buslajev, N.P. Kondakov: metody, idei, teorii* [The history of studies of Byzantine and ancient Russian art in Russia. F.I. Buslajev, N.P. Kondakov: methods, ideas, theories] (Moscow, 1985), pp. 140–7; Foletti, *Da Bisanzio*, pp. 184–7.

the etymological relation between *skaramangion* and the Russian term *sermiaga*, that is, a cape with a cowl used in the countryside.³⁰

Kondakov's interest in the nomadic population was not limited to this single article: observing the titles of the lectures he gave at Charles University in Prague from 1922 to December 1924, it is undeniable that in these years Kondakov was engaged in a new line of research, concerning nomads and their relation with Hellenic and Byzantine cultures.³¹ As pointed out by Ivan Foletti, there are two letters – one by Henri Grégoire³² to Kondakov, the other by Kondakov himself to his friend, the archaeologist Sergej A. Žebelev – revealing that Kondakov intended the article for *Byzantion* to be only a chapter of a major volume he conceived during the years of exile, dedicated to the impact of nomadic tribes on Byzantine culture.³³ Actually, “Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine” was not the first episode of Kondakov's interest in this topic: already in 1891 he had written about the great contribution of nomadic populations in the construction of medieval art, arguing that “barbarians” were the true unifying element for European culture, as well as the Roman-Hellenic tradition.³⁴ But in the milieu of the Russian emigrants, who had fled from the Bolshevik Revolution and at this point fully established themselves in Western and Central Europe, the theme gained new meaning: instead of mere scholarly

30 Kondakov reported here a conjecture first formulated by the Russian-born linguist (but of German origins) Max Vasmer: Kondakov, “Les costumes”, p. 28.

31 The titles of the lectures are listed in: Vernadskij, “Kondakov”, pp. XXVI–XXVII, n. 3. Furthermore, Vernadskij described Kondakov's interest in the art of nomadic populations: Georgij Vernadskij, “O naučnoj dejatel'nosti N.P. Kondakova” [On the scientific activity of N.P. Kondakov], in *Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov, 1844–1924. K vosmidesjatiletju so dnja roždenija* [Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov, 1844–1924. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday], ed. Lubor Niederle [et al.] (Prague, 1924), pp. 3–16.

32 Who translated from Russian Kondakov's “Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine”.

33 The letter by Henri Gregoire is nowadays conserved in the archive of the Památník Národního Písennictví of Prague, while the one to Žebelev is published in: *Mir Russoj Vizantinistiki. Materialy arhivov Sankt-Peterburga*, ed. Igor P. Medvedev (Saint Petersburg, 2004), p. 724. For an overview, see: Ivan Foletti, “Nikodim Pavlovitch Kondakov et Prague. Comment l'émigration change l'histoire (de l'art)”, *Opuscula Historiae Artium* 63 (2014), 2–11, sp. 8.

34 This consideration is included in the fourth volume of the series *Russkija Drevnosti v pamjatnikah iskusstva*, published between 1889 and 1899 and written together with the numismatist Ivan I. Tolstoj. The aim of *Russkija Drevnosti* was to reach the broadest audience possible: each fascicule cost only 1 rouble, and thanks to the simplicity of the style and the richness of the illustrations – and also to the absence of footnotes and citations – its contents were accessible to everyone. Nikodim Kondakov and Ivan Tolstoj, *Russkija Drevnosti v pamjatnikah iskusstva*, IV. *Hristianskija drevnosti Kríma, Kavkaza i Kíeva* [Russian antiquities and treasures of art, IV. The Christian antiquities of Crimea, Caucasus and Kiev] (Saint Petersburg, 1891).

research, the art of nomadic populations could be read through the lens of the Eurasianism.

3 Byzantium through the Lens of Eurasianism: *Seminarium Kondakovianum*

Besides the international recognition, in Prague Kondakov met a flourishing community of Russian scholars that looked to him as an intellectual guide. Other than teaching – and writing “Les costumes orientaux à la cour byzantine” – this enthusiasm finally led Kondakov to re-establish a Prague version of the “Academy of Freedom”³⁵ by hosting “privatissima” meetings in his apartment.³⁶ Among the habitués were the American businessman – and later ambassador in China – Charles R. Crane and his son John, plus a small community of Russian humanities scholars, including the art historian Nikolaj L. Okunev, Kondakov’s successor as professor at the Charles University, the economist Petr N. Savitskij, the aforementioned Georgij V. Vernadskij, and the linguist Nikolaj S. Trubeckoj.

The night between 16 and 17 February 1925, Nikodim Kondakov passed away; coincidentally, the news reached Henri Grégoire in Brussels while the Belgian scholar was receiving the printed copies of the first issue of *Byzantion*. The heritage of Kondakov was promptly taken over by the Russian scholars he had drawn around him: on 22 April of the same year, a dozen émigrés decided to publish in his memory a collection of essays contributed by the best scholars in Byzantine studies, archaeology, and art history.³⁷ On the same occasion, they also agreed to found a seminar bearing his name, *Seminarium Kondakovianum*.³⁸ The purpose of the newly born seminar was to complete

35 The “Academy of Freedom” was the definition coined by Michail Rostovtzeff for the meetings Kondakov used to hold every Tuesday night in his apartment in Liteinyi Prospekt 6, in Saint Petersburg, during the 1890s. Because of his appointment at the Academy of Science, Kondakov was no longer obliged to teach, so he used to invite a select group of prominent scholars to discuss art, history, science, and politics on a weekly basis. Michail Rostovtzeff, “Stranichki vospominanii” [Pages of memories], in Niederle, *Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov*, 23–9.

36 Vernadskij, “Nikodim Pavlovič Kondakov”, p. xxviii.

37 The volume was published one year later, with contributions by Nicolae Iorga, Georgos Soteriu, Antonio Muñoz, Gabriel Millet, Josep Puig i Cadafalch and Ormonde M. Dalton: *Recueil d'études dédiées à la mémoire de N.P. Kondakov. Archéologie. Histoire de l'art*, (Prague, 1926).

38 In 1931 *Seminarium Kondakovianum* changed its name to *Archeologický institut N.P. Kondakova* (N.P. Kondakov’s Archeological Institute) and after the Second World War it

the publication of Kondakov's writings: in 1927, *Seminarium Kondakovianum* published the unfinished memoir *Vospominanija i dumy* [Memories and reflections], and between 1928 and 1933 the four volumes of *Russkaja Ikona* [The Russian icon].³⁹ The community also began to organize a series of interesting lectures, and above all ideated a periodical devoted to Byzantine culture, the first issue of which appeared in 1927. Named simply *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, in its ten issues the journal published articles about an uncommon heterogeneity of topics, covering an extensive chronology.

This variety was due to the heterogeneous background of the scholars involved in the project, as well as to the impact of Eurasianism's ideas on the Russian community of Prague. Vernadskij and the archaeologist Alexander P. Kalitinskij – both engaged in Eurasian magazines and seminars in the Czechoslovakian capital – were appointed as directors of the Seminarium. The founding group also included Vernadskij's sister, Nina, who by then was completing her medical studies at Charles University, and her husband Nikolaj P. Toll', who, after fighting for the White Army in the Civil War, resumed his studies in Byzantine history and archaeology under Kondakov; the 65-year-old princess Natalia G. Jašvil', who in Prague practiced icon painting under Kondakov's supervision (she also portrayed the old scholar) and her daughter Tatiana Rodzianko; and other young scholars, such as the art historians Marija A. Andre'eva and Nicolaj T. Beljaev.

The first issue of the journal was published in 1927, shortly after Vernadskij's departure to Yale, where he was appointed professor of modern history, and its table of contents merged together Kondakov's interests in Byzantine iconography with Eurasian topics. The uncommon result was experimental and even avanguardiste: articles about the Khludov Psalter,⁴⁰ the iconography of the

merged into the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czechoslovakia. On the Kondakov Institute, see Věra Hrochová, "Les études byzantines en Tchécoslovaquie", *Balkan Studies* 13 (1972), 301–11, sp. 303–6; Zuzana Skálová, "Das Prager Seminarium Kondakovianum, später das Archäologische Kondakov-Institut und sein Archiv (1925–1952)", *Slavica Gandensia* 18 (1991), (= *A Thousand-Year Heritage of Christian Art in Russia*, Proceedings of the Symposium, Hernen, September 1988), pp. 21–43; Jana H. Hlaváčková, "Josef Myslivec and His Catalogue of Icons from the Collection of the Former N.P. Kondakov Institute in Prague", in Josef Myslivec, *Catalogue of Icons*, (Prague, 1998), pp. 7–11; Lovino, "Communism", 150–4.

39 Nikodim Kondakov, *Vospominanija i dumy* [Memories and reflections], Prague 1927; Nikodim Kondakov, *Russkaja Ikona* [The Russian icon], 4 vol. (Prague, 1928–1933).

40 Nicolas V. Malickij, "Čerty palestinskoj i vostočnoj ikonografii v vizantijskoj Psaltiri s illjustracijami na poljachu tipa Chludovskoja" [Traits d'iconographie palestinienne dans le psautier byzantin à l'illustration marginales du type Chludoff], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 49–64.

Orante Virgin⁴¹ or the fresco cycle of the Serbian church of Novy Pazar⁴² stood next to others dedicated to the types of *fibulae* excavated in Southern Russia,⁴³ the history and development of Russian weights and measures,⁴⁴ or the circulation of Chinese silk in Russia.⁴⁵ Vernadskij's contribution could be seen as a manifesto for the new pathway taken by Eurasians in medieval studies: he wrote about the diplomatic relations between Paleaologan Constantinople, the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt, and the Kipchak Khanate, examining a pivotal moment as the transfer of "civilization power" from the Mediterranean basin to the Eurasian steppe.⁴⁶ This first article was later expounded by Dmitrij A. Rasovskij (who was also the secretary of the Institute), who published a series of articles still unsurpassed about the nomadic populations of the Eurasian steppe, the Comans (or Polovtsy, as they were named in Russia), and their complex and mostly unknown ethnographic and historical origins.⁴⁷

Moreover, the non-academic nature of the journal⁴⁸ allowed *Seminarium* to accept a broader range of topics, both in time and space: while the almost

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- 41 Sergej A. Žebelev, "Oranta. K voprosu o vozniknovenii tipa" [Orante. À propos de l'origine du type], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 1–8.
- 42 Nikolaj L. Okunev, "Stolpy Sv. Georgija – Razvaliny hrama XII v. okolo Novogo Bazara" [Piliers de Saint Georges. Les ruines d'une église du XII^e s. près de Novy Pazar], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 205–6.
- 43 Alexander P. Kalitinskij, "O někotoryh formah fibuly iz južnoj Rossii" [Quelques types de la fibule dans la Russie méridionale], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 191–214.
- 44 Nikolaj T. Beljaev, "O drevnih i nynešnih russkih merah protjaženija i vesa" [Les origines des poids et mesures russes], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 247–88.
- 45 Nikolaj Toll', "Zametki o kitajskom šelke na juge Rossii" [Notes sur la soie chinoise dans la Russie méridionale], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 85–92.
- 46 Georgij Vernadskij, "Zolotaja Orda, Egipet i Vizantija v ih vzaimootnošenijah v carstvovanie Mihaila Paleologa" [Le Khanat de Kiptchak, l'Égypte et Byzance pendant le règne de Michel Paléologue], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 1 (1927), 73–84.
- 47 Dimitrij A. Rasovskij, "Polovcy, I. Proišoždenie Polovcev" [Les Comans, I. L'origine des Comans], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 7 (1935), 245–62; Dimitrij A. Rasovskij, "Polovcy, II. Razselenie Polovcev" [Les Comans, II. L'expansion des Comans], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 8 (1936), 161–82; Dimitrij A. Rasovskij, "Polovcy, III. Predely 'polya poloveckogo'" [Les Comans, III. Le territoire des Comans], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 9 (1937), pp. 71–85 and 10 (1938), 155–78; Dimitrij A. Rasovskij, "Polovcy, IV. Voennaja istorij Polovcev" [Les Comans, IV. L'histoire militaire des Comans], *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 11 (1940), 95–128.
- 48 The seminar was structured as a private club, even when in 1931 its statute changed and the group founded the Kondakov Institute. Moreover, even if the initiative was warmly (but not financially) supported by the President of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Seminarium Kondakovianum* suffered the disdain of certain segments of the Czech academic community: one point of proof is the fact that Josef Myslivec was the only Czech art historian who published in the journal. On this, see Rhineland, "Exiled Russian", p. 336.

contemporary Prague-based journal *Byzantinoslavica*⁴⁹ focused strictly on Byzantine-Slavonic relations, *Seminarium* was free to experiment with unexpected affinities and topics. This interest in the Orient even led the journal to publish two articles specifically dedicated to Japan: in 1935 Kani'chi Asakawa, the first professor of Japanese history and the head of the East Asia Library at Yale, wrote about the foundation of the Shogunate by Minamoto no Yoritomo, while Vernadskij analyzed Russian relations with the East, describing two Japanese drawings of a Russian settlement in Aniwa Bay, located at the southern end of Sakhalin Island and by then administered by Japan.⁵⁰

Other issues repeated the same twofold interests for Byzantine art – the clearest among Kondakov's legacies – and Eurasian topics, so that already in 1928 *Seminarium* reorganized its publications in a more organic way, establishing two different series of monographs: *Zographika*, dedicated to the history of Orthodox art, and *Skythika*, for archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions. *Skythika* was specifically dedicated to the nomadic populations of Eurasia: as explained by the editors, the name of the series derived from the term *Σκυθία*, used since Aristotle and Callimachus to indicate the plains from Pannonia to Indian peninsula. The seminar launched this new series with an essay by Michail I. Rostovtzeff, "*Le centre de l'Asie, la Russie, la Chine et le style animal*".⁵¹ Even if Rostovtzeff did not join the Eurasian ranks, and even if his émigré trajectory after the Bolshevik Revolution was totally different to that of the scholars of *Seminarium Kondakovianum*,⁵² he always remained close to the Russian community

49 The idea of *Byzantinoslavica* arose by the direct solicitation of president Masaryk. As a prefatory note in the first fascicule explained, in 1928 the president solicited the creation of a research group specifically addressing the study of Byzantine-Slavic relations. In May 1929, a Byzantine Commission was created inside the Institute of Slavonic Studies in Prague; among the scholars involved in this Byzantine Commission, there were also two prominent members of *Seminarium Kondakovianum* as the director Alexander P. Kalitinskij and Nikolaj L. Okunev. The first issue of *Byzantinoslavica* finally appeared in autumn 1929. On the relations between *Seminarium Kondakovianum* and *Byzantinoslavica*, see: Francesco Lovino, "Seminarium Kondakovianum/Byzantinoslavica: A Comparison", in *From Nikodim Kondakov to the Hans Belting Library: Byzantine Studies as a Bridge Between the Worlds*, eds. Ivan Foletti, Francesco Lovino, and Veronika Tvrzňíková (Brno, 2018), 38–55.

50 Kani'chi Asakawa, "The Founding of the Shogunate by Minamoto-No-Yoritomo", *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 6 (1933), pp. 109–29; Georgij Vernadskij, "A Japanese Drawing of the Russian Settlement in Aniva Bay, Karafuto (1854)", *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 8 (1936), 79–82.

51 Michail Rostovtzeff, *Le centre de l'Asie, la Russie, la Chine et le style animal* (*Skythika*, 1) (Prague, 1929).

52 Rostovtzeff emigrated first to Sweden, then to England, and finally to the United States. Overseas, he accepted the chair at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, then in 1925 he

of Prague. Rostovtzeff particularly claimed the need for understanding of a *longue durée* between ancient times and modern history, a notion that was accepted and supported by *Seminarium Kondakovianum* and the Annales School in France almost simultaneously.⁵³ Already in 1900, when he was still a student, Rostovtzeff wrote an article for the Russian magazine *Russkaja mysl'* [The Russian Thought] claiming the complexity of ancient times can be acceptably explained only in analogy with contemporary times,⁵⁴ while in 1922 he maintained that the history of modern Europe should begin in the protohistoric and classic period.⁵⁵

Yet another aspect merits attention: namely, how *Seminarium Kondakovianum* was not just addressed to the Russian émigré scholars, but to the academic community worldwide. Thanks to the unconditional esteem earned by Kondakov during his life, many outstanding scholars were glad to contribute to the journal: in its second issue, *Seminarium* contained an article by the Austro-Polish art historian Josef Strzygowski on the marble panels from the cathedral of Wawel, and one by the French Paul Perdrizet on the archangel Uriel, while in subsequent issues it published articles by leading Byzantine scholars of the time, such as Charles Diehl, Kurt Weitzmann, the Czech František Dvorník, and Franz Dölger.

4 Conclusion: The Epilogue of *Seminarium Kondakovianum* (and Eurasianism, too)

The Second World War came as the definitive end point for *Seminarium Kondakovianum's* activities. Already in 1937, the members discussed the possibility of leaving Prague, worried by hints that the Czechoslovakian government was

moved to Yale. On his life and studies, see: Arnaldo Momigliano, "M.I. Rostovtzeff", *The Cambridge Journal* 7 (1954), 334–6; Glen W. Bowersock, "Rostovtzeff in Madison", *American Scholar* 55/3 (1986), 391–400; Marinus A. Wes, *Michael Rostovtzeff, Historian in Exile: Russian Roots in an American Context* (Stuttgart, 1990); Francesco Lovino, "Southern Caucasus in Perspective: The Scholarly Debate through the Pages of *Seminarium Kondakovianum* and *Skythika*", *Convivium Supplementum: The South Caucasus* (2016), 36–51.

53 On the Annales School, see: Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School 1929–89* (Stanford, 1990); André Burguière, *L'École des Annales: Une histoire intellectuelle* (Paris, 2006).

54 Michail Rostovtzeff, "Kapitalizm i narodnoe hozjastvo v drevnem mire", *Russkaja mysl'* 21 (1900), 195–217 (translation in Michael I. Rostovtzeff, "Capitalismo ed economia nazionale nel mondo antico", in idem, *Per la storia economica e sociale del mondo ellenistico-romano. Saggi scelti*, eds. Tommaso Gnoli and John Thornton (Catania, 1995), pp. 1–28, sp. p. 3).

55 Michail Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, 1922), p. 209.

about to terminate all financial support to the Kondakov Institute. They looked to Prince Paul, regent of Yugoslavia, whose agreement to support the Institute arrived early in 1938. In June, Dmitrij Rasovskij, one of the founding members of Seminarium, went to Belgrade to open the new office, taking with him a few of the most valuable books and papers of the Institute. As Rhinelanders wrote:

It was all done as quietly as possible. If word got out that any members of the Institute were even contemplating removing its possessions from the country, the rival “Czechoslovakian Slavonic Institute” would surely seize all that remained and take over the whole organization.⁵⁶

The situation collapsed soon: in August, the Director of the Institute, Nikolaj Toll', reached Belgrade, appointing the 30-year-old Nikolaj E. Andrejev as his successor in Prague; then, at the beginning of 1939, Natalia Jašvil', the spiritual leader of the seminar, died, leaving Andrejev almost alone.⁵⁷ Though Andrejev was able to keep the Institute out of the drama until the end of the war, the Kondakov Institute in Prague *de facto* ceased its activities in 1939.⁵⁸ *Seminarium Kondakovianum* appeared one last time in 1940 in Belgrade, published by a renovated editorial board, with the Byzantine historian (and Russian émigré) Georgij Ostrogorskij as president and Dmitrij Rasovskij as secretary and the only one still standing from the Prague period.⁵⁹

The Second World War came as a (less) definitive end point for Eurasianism, too.⁶⁰ In Berlin, in Prague, and in the other cities of Central Europe, along with the Red Army came also the SMERSH, the special units of military counter-intelligence, to search for Nazi collaborators and anti-Soviet elements. Their interest was concentrated especially on the liberal-minded intellectuals, that is, the backbone of the Eurasian movement. In Prague more than 200 Russian

56 Rhinelanders, “Exiled Russian”, pp. 345–6.

57 On Natalia G. Jašvil', see: Kateřina Iberl, “Princess Natalia Grigoryevna Yashvil – the Pillar of Seminarium Kondakovianum”, *Parrésia* 5 (2012), 323–3.

58 On the last years of the Institute in Prague, see: Rhinelanders, “Exiled Russian”, pp. 346–51; Lovino, “Communism”, pp. 150–6; and especially the autobiography of Andrejev himself: Nikolaj Andrejev, *A Moth on the Fence: Memoirs of Russia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia and Western Europe* (Kingston-upon-Thames, 2009), pp. 140–68.

59 Nikolaj Toll' was by then already in the United States. Andrejev, *A Moth on the Fence*, pp. 140–4.

60 Eurasianism has gained new attention in post-Soviet countries during the 1990s, especially within the far-right movements. On this, see: *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship*, ed. Marlène Laruelle (Lanham, MD, 2015); Mark Bassin, *The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca, NY, 2016).

émigrés were arrested in the first weeks after the liberation of Czechoslovakia; the Russian University was closed, and the secondary school was transformed into a Soviet institution.⁶¹ Petr Savitskij, one of the founding members of *Seminarium Kondakovianum* and a leader of the Eurasians of Prague, was also arrested: he spent eleven years in a Soviet labor camp, and only in 1956 – thanks to Khrushchev *otpepel* – could he return to Prague.⁶²

Even if its experience lasted for little more than a decade, *Seminarium Kondakovianum* was able to develop a new approach to the subject, representing a real turning point in the history of Byzantine studies. Far from Russia, where Byzantium was considered an element of national identity – as demonstrated by even Stalin's short-lived renaissance of Byzantinism in the late-1930s⁶³ – they placed Byzantine culture in a broader context, as a part of a multicultural experience. Moreover, the Eurasian influence helped them to surpass the arbitrary dichotomy between east and west, focused merely on the Mediterranean basin and Europe, by introducing into the critical debate the direction east-Far East. This new perspective led *Seminarium* to publish seminal works on the liminal territories between the Byzantine empire and Asian cultures. It is not surprising that such attention was given to nomadic populations: across the space from Hungary to Manchuria and throughout history from the Scythians to the modern Mongols, nomads acted as a link between Hellenic and Chinese (and Indian, and Iranian) cultures. This uninterrupted dialogue between Byzantium, nomads, and Asia shaped the identity modern Russia – the pivotal topic of reflexion within the Eurasian movement.

Shifting the viewpoint eastward is the legacy of *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, still alive more than 70 years after its last issue: a historiographical innovation that is still misunderstood, or completely ignored, by most of the contemporary literature in Byzantine studies.

61 Anastasie Koprivová-Vukolová, “Osud ruské emigrace v ČSR po r. 1945” [The Destiny of Russian Emigration in Czechoslovakia after 1945], in *Ruská a ukrajinská emigrace v ČSR v letech 1918–1945*, ed. Václav Veber (Prague, 1993–1995), I, pp. 80–94.

62 Once he returned in Czechoslovakia, the Communist regime denied his request to teach: even so, he soon became a member of the Governative commission of Agrarian geography. In 1960, Savitskij was arrested again by the secret police, because of the publication in Germany and France (under the *nom de plume* of Petr Vostokov) of a few poems denouncing the living conditions in Stalin's gulags. Chinyaeva, *Russians outside Russia*, pp. 218, 237 (where she quoted her interviews with Ivan P. Savitskij, Petr's son and historian).

63 On this, see: Sergey A. Ivanov, “Byzance rouge: la byzantinologie et les communistes (1928–1948)”, in *Byzance et l'Europe*, ed. Marie-France Auzépy (Paris, 2003), pp. 55–60.

PART 2

Literary Trends



The Power of the Cross: The Role of the *Helper* in Kassia's Hymns' Narratological Structure and Its Doctrinal Implications

Laura Borghetti

1 Introduction

A challenging opportunity for contemporary historical and literary scholarship is the possibility of a significantly comprehensive view over the past ages. Having at our disposal countless material traces and a huge background of research allows us not only to treat single events as such, but also to individuate among them some tendencies – that we can define as *trends* – and some specific phases or circumstances that may constitute over time actual *turning points*.¹

When it comes to applying the concept of a turning point to the Byzantine world, the same definition seems to fit the centuries of the iconoclastic controversy well. Several transformations, more or less promptly, occurred between the 8th and the first half of the 9th century within, among others, politics – in terms of balance of power between Emperor and Patriarchate – society, and liturgy. The monastic reformation of the Byzantine rite, carried out by the Studite monks in Constantinople, has had substantial consequences in the euchologic, ceremonial, musical, and even architectural framework.² Within the incessant fluctuations and changes of her time – namely, the first half of the 9th century – Kassia herself embodies a turning point, not only for her ground-breaking writing style but also for her prominent role as a woman, a high-ranking member of the monastic community, and poet.

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- 1 I rely on Roger D. Launius' fruitful definition of historical turning point: "At a core level, a turning point may be defined as an event or set of events that, had it not happened as it did, would have prompted a different course in history. [...] From a sociological perspective, a turning point represents a lasting shift in the *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the age", in Roger D. Launius, "What Are Turning Points in History, and What Were They for the Space Age?", in *Societal Impact of Spaceflight*, ed. Steven J. Dick (Washington DC, 2007), pp. 19–39.
 - 2 Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, 1993), pp. 52–66. More about the role of the Monastery of Stoudios at the time of the iconoclastic controversy is in Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London, 2012), pp. 68–9.

Although the *desideratum* of a critical edition of her hymnographic writings has not been fulfilled yet, her corpus has been shown to have a rich and complex content that encourages deeper studies into its historical and literary perspective.³

Kassia lived and worked during the second phase of Iconoclasm. According to the historiographers and to the latest studies, she was born between 800 and 805 in a Constantinopolitan aristocratic family and died during Emperor Michael III's reign, hence before the year 867.⁴ Her literary production consists of both a rich collection of liturgical hymns dedicated to male and female saints and to Christian holy days, and a series of moral sentences, the *gnomai*. Her verses and aphorisms stand out for their concise, dynamic, and evocative style, in line with the theological and liturgical changes of those years. Kassia, due to her zealous monastic life in her own monastery in Constantinople and according to her alleged correspondence with the monk Theodore the Studite, seems to have actively taken part in the ferment of those years. In the course of this article, Kassia's iconodulism, traditionally affirmed and accepted by modern scholars, will be analysed and called into question in light, among other reasons, of some of her verses in the Hymn to Saint Christina.⁵

The main objective of my study is to analyse the modalities in which historical content and doctrinal developments are reflected in the narrative structure of Kassia's hymns that are dedicated to Christian female martyrs. My intervention especially focuses on the role of the Holy Cross and the Christian Virtues used as instruments of salvation by Saint Christina in the Hymn dedicated to her by Kassia. The present contribution is structured in four sections. A first preliminary analysis of the narratological structure of Kassia's hymns will present the role of the Cross as a *magical instrument*, according to Vladimir Propp's theories of the *Morphology of the folktale*. After this preliminary clarification of the narratological function of the Cross, the two following sections will highlight its relevance both in connection to other Christian historical turning points and to the doctrine of aniconism, which played a substantial role especially during the years of the iconoclastic controversy. Finally, these three

3 Due to the lack of a critical edition of Kassia's religious hymns, the Greek text and translations used for the purpose of this paper have been taken from Antonia Tripolitis, *Kassia: The legend, the woman and her work* (London, 1992).

4 Ilse Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* (Berlin, 1967), p. 31. See also: Marc Lauxtermann, "Three-biographical notes", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91 (1998), 391–403.

5 For further details about Kassia's monastic life, see Kurt Sherry, *Kassia the Nun in Context* (Piscataway, NJ, 2013), pp. 63–91. About Kassia's Constantinopolitan monastery, see Rochow, *Studien*, pp. 26–9. About Kassia's correspondence with Theodore the Studite, see Rochow, *Studien*, pp. 20–6 and Georgios Fatouros, ed. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1992), 1:5–187; 2:189–861.

different approaches – the narratological, the historical, and the doctrinal – will serve as tools to analyse Kassia's actual faith, by even questioning both her traditionally affirmed iconodulism and her alleged authorship of the Hymn to Saint Christina.

2 Narratological Observations: Holy Cross as *Helper* or *Magical Object*?

While dealing with Kassia's works and literary personality, an in-depth analysis of Kassia's hagiographic hymnography has led me to reflect upon the opportunity of a narratological approach to her verses as a way to shed light on aspects of Kassia's ideological background possibly hidden behind her *usus scribendi*. An application of the narratological structure of Vladimir Propp to Kassia's hagiographic hymnography has turned out to be quite engaging and I could observe both thematic and structural constants as well as exceptions.⁶

A fundamental paradigm in this narratological analysis has been Propp's distribution of the narrative functions among the various *dramatis personae* within the framework of the folktale. In his work, Propp illustrates the sphere of action of the *hero*, usually departing on a search and going through several vicissitudes, on the one hand hindered by the function of the *villain* and, on the other hand, supported by the action of a *helper*, with the goal of reaching the sought-for person, usually the *princess*.⁷

Within my analysis of Kassia's hymns, in particular, I examined the transfer of roles – common to all eight of Kassia's female hymns – that occurred throughout the passage from the purely hagiographic verses to the proper euchologic finale. Initially, the female saint acts the part of the *heroine*, while at the same time Christ embodies the *helper* and the *princess*, because the ultimate goal of the saint's struggle is the celestial marriage with Christ and her spiritual salvation. But when the hagiographic verses turn into the final prayer, we can see an inversion of the characters' functions: the *protagonists* become the faithful – and also the composer, who speaks for them – and the saint is “downgraded” to the role of the *helper* who intercedes on their behalf with God for the salvation of

6 For a broader depiction of the narratological structure of Kassia's hymns, see Laura Borghetti, “A ‘Euchologic’ Narrative in Byzantium? Towards a Narratological Approach to Kassia's Female Liturgical Poetry” in *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological Approaches to Byzantine Texts and Images*, eds. Charis Messis, Margaret Mullett and Ingela Nilsson (Uppsala, 2018), pp. 11–36.

7 For a more in-depth analysis of Propp's distribution of functions among the *dramatis personae*, see Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of The Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Eastford, CT, 1958), pp. 72–5.

the community. The principal textual sign of this inversion is the use of the verb *πρεσβεύω*, which means, literally, “to become an ambassador”, that is the saint standing in front of God on behalf of the devotee. *Πρεσβεύω*, in the majority of hagiographic *troparia*, makes up the cornerstone of the euchologic finale.

Following this brief introduction to the essential narratological structure of Kassia's *troparia*, the first focus of this contribution will be the role of the Cross and theological Virtues seen as *magical objects* – according to Propp's terminology – and their relationship with the figure of Christ in the role of the *helper* within the poetical framework of the Hymn to Saint Christina.⁸

Saint Christina's origins are quite debated due to several disagreements between archaeological remains – according to which the Saint would hail from the Italian city of Bolsena – and the literary sources: several *passiones* and the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* locate her in Tiro, Phoenicia.⁹ Regardless of her provenance, several hagiographic traditions describe her as a 11-year-old young girl, living during Emperor Diocletian's reign, who was reported by her father himself to the magistrates because of her refusal to venerate pagan idols. In accordance with the hagiographic *topos*, Christina will be subjected to heinous tortures and miraculously withstand them.¹⁰

The Hymn dedicated to her by Kassia is a solemn poem where the use of the narratological structural elements mentioned above is highly evident. It is a five *stichera troparion* that celebrates Christina's victory against the temptations of the demons by refusing the idolatry and withstanding the tortures. Christina is depicted both as holy warrior under Christ's *signa* and as glorious bride while attending her nuptials with Christ. The Holy Cross, together with the other theological virtues, plays a meaningful role throughout the whole poem, as one can observe in the following examples:

I,4: δυνάμει τοῦ σταυροῦ σου, φιλάνθρωπε	I,4: by the power of your Cross, friend of mankind
II,10–1: τῆ παντευχίᾳ [...] τῆς πίστεως τῷ ὅπλῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ	II,10–1: with the armour of the faith, with the weapon of the Cross
III,18: τοῦ σταυροῦ σου ἡ δύναμις	III,18: the force of your Cross
IV,25;27–8: Σταυρὸν ὡς ὄπλον κραταίον	IV,25;27–8: The Cross as a mighty weapon,

8 Propp, *Morphology*, p. 40.

9 Henri Leclercque, “Bolsena”, in *Dictionnaire d'archeologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, II (Paris, 1924–1950), coll. 980–88. Pio Paschini, “Ricerche agiografiche: Santa Cristina di Bolsena”, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 2 (1925), 167–94. Agostino Amore, “Cristina, santa martire di Bolsena”, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* IV (Roma, 1961–1970), coll. 330–2.

10 Vasilii V. Latyšev, ed., *Menologii Anonymi Byzantini saeculi 10 quae supersunt* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 206–10.

τὴν πίστιν ὡς θώρακα, ἐλπίδα θυρεὸν
ἀγάπην τόξον¹¹ faith as armour, hope as a shield love
as a bow.

These verses describe the virtues the saint grasps tightly as though they were weapons. These are the three theological Virtues that Paul of Tarsus described in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:13):

νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη.
τὰ τρία ταῦτα, μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ
ἀγάπη. So now faith, hope, and love abide;
these three, but the greatest of these
is love.

In the hymn, the three Pauline theological Virtues are represented as a sort of catalogue of weaponry: faith is described as an armour, hope as a shield, and love as a bow. A common feature of these is the fact that they are purely weapons of defence, and alongside them is the Cross. The ὄπλον, which the Cross fits metaphorically, was the great distinctive shield of the ὄπλίτης – the heavy infantry soldier from the times of archaic Greece. The only weapon that appears in the list and could potentially have been used for offence is the bow of love (τόξον).

The absence of arrows in this hymn seems to echo that of the pre-Christian imagery of Eros: they, along with the bow, comprise the armament of Eros, the traditional divinity of earthly love. The Hellenistic *topos* of the archer Eros is often present alongside the τόξον and the nouns βέλος or ἰός ('arrows'), and this can be seen in the following examples of text from *Idillium* XXIII by Theocritus (vv. 4–5) and from the epigram 12,50 by Asclepiades (vv. 2–4):

κοῦκ ᾔδει τὸν Ἔρωτα, τίς ἦν θεός, ἀλίκα τόξα
χερσὶ κρατεῖ, πῶς πικρὰ βέλη ποτὶ καὶ Δία βάλλει.¹²

He did not know which god is Love, whose great
bow he yields with his hands, how bitter the arrow he shoots against Zeus
himself;

οὐ σὲ μόνον χαλεπὴ Κύπρις ἐλήισατο,
οὐδ' ἐπὶ σοὶ μόνῳ κατεθήκατο τόξα
καὶ ἰούς
πικρὸς Ἔρωσ.¹³ Not only you, grievous Cypris, did
he conquer,
nor for you alone did bitter Eros
store up
his bows and arrows.

11 Tripolitis, *Kassia*, pp. 57–61.

12 Andrew S.F. Gow, ed., *Theocritus*, 2 vols (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1952; repr. 1965), 1:176.

13 Friedrich Jacobs, ed., *Anthologia Graeca. Ad fidem codicis olim palatini nunc parisini ex apographo gothano*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1814), 2:463–4.

As Eva Cantarella also wrote in her essay *L'Amore è un dio* ("Love is a god"), Eros was "an armed god that, with his own arrows, often shot mortals. [...] Eros, though, was not just an emotion, but also sexual desire".¹⁴ Therefore, he is distant from the celestial love (ἀγάπη) the saint feels towards Christ and which is mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians. The *maior autem ex his est caritas* is, hence, very different from Virgil's *amor omnia vincit*. The saint, in fact, needs no arrow because she does not have to entrap anyone: her path is completely internal, heartfelt and unidirectional toward the salvation that leads to Christ.

Returning to the defensive nature of Christina's weapons, this feature is closely connected to the saint's mission. The objective of salvation and celestial union with Christ will not be attained just by challenging an enemy in direct combat, but by withstanding the torments of martyrdom. John Chrysostom, in the homily *De adoratione pretiosae Crucis*, listed only instruments of defence, and the arrow was not included in his catalogue of weapons:

Οὐ θυρεὸν ἔδωκεν, οὐ κράνος, οὐ	He did not give a shield, nor a
τόξον, οὐ θώρακα, οὐ κνημίδα ¹⁵	helmet,
	nor a bow, nor a breastplate, nor
	greaves

Even though Chrysostom does not specifically mention the metaphorical value of weapons – as it occurs in the Hymn to Saint Christina – they belong, however, to the imagery of *miles Christi*: Chrysostom, in fact, speaks of the faithful as a soldier of the soul, the στρατιώτης, who does not need any weapons because the strength of the Cross will be enough to guide him in victory against the δαίμονες.¹⁶

Christina's weapons, even though just metaphors for theological Virtues and not concrete military instruments, are essentially weapons supplied by Christ, the *helper*, to aid the saint in her sacrifice and, therefore, can be defined as simple *magical objects*, albeit with an elevated allegorical value. The role played by the Cross differs: although it appears in the catalogue of the fourth stanza in the hymn, it does not merely represent a *magical object*. Its value and its role are decidedly more complex. The two following analyses of both the

14 Eva Cantarella, *L'Amore è un dio* (Milan, 2007), p. 11.

15 PG 52:837.

16 The dispute against the daemons is also a widespread hagiographic *topos*. For a broader illustration of this topic, see Thomas Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos: Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 164–6.

historical and the philosophical aspects of the Cross will help in clarifying its overall connotation.

3 The Holy Cross as Core Element in Historical Turning Points

From a historical and theological viewpoint, the Cross has often taken a central role in affirming Christian doctrine. To this point, it is important to mention the well-known episode of Constantine the Great's vision: according to the sources, on the eve of the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 A.D., the Cross appears as a prodigious sign through a light in the sky.¹⁷ This is how Eusebius of Caesarea describes it in *Vita Constantini*:

ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας, ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκλινούσης, αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν ἔφη ἐν αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἡλίου σταυροῦ τρόπαιον ἐκ φωτὸς συνιστάμενον, γραφὴν τε αὐτῷ συνῆφθαι λέγουσαν· τούτῳ νικά.¹⁸

He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to end, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, bearing the inscription: *conquer by this*.

A second version of the same event is worth mentioning. Lactantius, tutor of Constantine's son Crispus, in his *De mortibus persecutorum* does not report any prodigious vision, but rather the emperor's alleged dream the night before the battle. It enjoined him to adorn his soldiers' shields with Christ's symbol of the Cross:

Commonitus est in quiete Constantinus, ut caeleste signum dei notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret. Fecit ut iussus est et transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scutis notat. Quo signo armatus exercitus capit ferrum.¹⁹

17 More on Constantine I and the battle of the Milvian Bridge is in: Oliver Nicholson, "Constantine's Vision of the Cross", *Vigiliae Christianae* 54 (2000), pp. 309–23, and Nikolaus Staubach, "In hoc signo vinces: Wundererklärung und Wunderkritik im vormodernen Wissensdiskurs", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43 (2009), pp. 1–52.

18 Friedhelm Winkelmann, ed., *Eusebius Werke: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, 9 vols (Berlin, 1975), 1:1:30.

19 John L. Creed, ed., *Lactantius, De mortibus persecutorum* (Oxford, 1984), p. 62, 44–5.

Constantine was directed in a dream to cause the heavenly sign to be delineated on the shields, and so to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded and, by transforming a letter X, its top turned around, he marked Christ on the shields. Having this sign, his troops stood to arms.

By the 4th century, the Cross seems to have already assumed its decisive cultural, historical, and religious role. Constantine impersonates the *topos* of *miles Christi* and, just like Christina in the hymn dedicated to her, will win his battle with the symbol of the Cross at his side. The verb *νικάω* in the inscription also appears in Christina's fourth stanza when, holding the Cross as an *ὄπλον*, she will be able to resist the deceptions of the *τύραννοι*:

IV,25;28–9: Σταυρὸν ὡς ὄπλον
κραταιόν,
[...] τῶν τυραννῶν
τὰς τιμωρίας ἐνίκησας ἀνδρείως

IV,25;28–9: The Cross as a
mighty weapon,
[...] she bravely overcame the
punishments of her oppressors

It is clear then that the Cross as theological weapon plays a fundamental role in both Constantine's and Christina's fights for the true faith. At the same time, the reign of Constantine constitutes a crucial turning point of Christian history, as much as Kassia's time, namely the peak of the *klimax* in the controversy of the icons.

In this regard, jumping ahead in time to 726, the well-known and much-discussed removal of the Christ icon on the Chalke Gate of the Great Palace in Constantinople by Leo III is meaningful in the evolution of the role of the Cross. The literary sources report that Leo III ordered its substitution with an image of the Cross, an act that has long been considered the beginning of the Iconoclastic Era. Most historiographical sources are not, however, contemporary accounts of this event and, therefore, tend to be partial and propagandistic in favour of the Iconophile *pars* or, on the other hand, highly derivative and, thus, not reliable.²⁰ Hence, the most recent studies are quite doubtful about the historical authenticity of this event – but, on the other side, it has been stated with some certainty that empress Eirene, while restoring the cult of holy images in the last years of the 9th century, put up an icon of Christ

20 For an exhaustive catalogue of the sources, see: Marie-France Auzépy, *L'Histoire des Iconoclastes* (Paris, 2007), pp. 149–64.

replacing an earlier image of the Cross.²¹ Furthermore, the presence of the Cross on the Chalke Gate seems to be proved by an epigram that Leo V, during his son's coronation in 815, allegedly inscribed under the Cross itself, which had just replaced empress Eirene's icon of Christ.²² The inscribed verses have been preserved by Theodore the Studite in his *Refutatio poematum iconomachorum*:

Λέων σὺν υἱῷ τῷ νέῳ Κωνσταντίνῳ	Leo with his son the young Constantine
Σταυροῦ χαράττει τὸν τρισόλβιον τύπον,	Marks the threefold blest symbol of the Cross
Καύχημα πιστῶν, ἐν πύλαις ἀνακτόρων. ²³	Vaunt of the faithful, on the gates of the palace.

Despite the complexity of thorough scholarship, due to the lack of reliable historiographical sources, the iconoclastic century seems to be, after all, a decisive turning point of the Cross in becoming a Christological and iconographical symbol of Christianity.

Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. Both mentioned historical turning points constitute – in turn – other turning points related to the symbolism of the Cross. The fundamental role of the Cross in the narratological structure and its being emblematic within crucial historical turning points make the Cross itself a fruitful key to interpretation of the following theological-literary issues.

4 The Holy Cross and Aniconism

It is not only its feature as a historical focal point that makes the Cross narratively interesting within the context of the Hymn to Saint Christina. Alongside it is the philosophical background of the theology of icons, which in the 8th and 9th centuries experienced a crucial change and redefinition. The fact that

21 Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850): A History* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 131. More on the debate about Leo III's role in the iconoclastic controversy is in Brubaker, *Inventing*, pp. 27–9.

22 The same epigram had been originally referred to Leo III. For an exhaustive argument against the original interpretation of these verses, see: Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 130–1.

23 PG 96:437.

Kassia composes her hymns close to the first half of the 9th century suggests the integral part the Cross played as an expression of these changes. The theological turning point of icons and the redefinition of their nature depended on the merging of two significant elements, among others: the aniconism of a Jewish origin – of which ample discussion is found in the early Christian literature – and the Platonic condemnation of imagery.

According to Plato, the perceivable reality is nothing more than a fallacious μίμησις (“mimesis”, “imitation”) of the intelligible reality (or rather εἶδη “ideas”), and the artistic creation (μιμητική) is doubly fallacious in that it is further μίμησις of a μίμησις. We can read this in *Republic* 598b):

Πόρρω ἄρα που τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἡ μιμητική ἐστι καί, ὡς ἔοικε, διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεργάζεται, ὅτι σμικρόν τι ἐκάστου ἐφάπτεται, καὶ τοῦτο εἶδωλον.²⁴

Therefore, imitation is far from the truth; and, as it seems, it is due to this that it produces everything – because it lays hold of a certain small part of each thing, and that part itself is only a phantom.

This aniconic aspect of Platonic philosophy is added to the condemnation of sacred images that was affirmed by the religious arguments of Christian apologetics. On the basis of, among other texts, Exodus 20:4–5, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius, among others, condemned the making of εἶδωλα (‘idols’), or rather, objects pretending to depict God, which were to be considered deplorable remains of the pagan tradition.

Ex. 20:4–5

οὐ ποιήσεις σεαυτῷ εἶδωλον οὐδὲ παντὸς ὁμοίωμα, ὅσα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῇ γῆ κάτω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς. οὐ προσκυνήσεις αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ μὴ λατρεύσης αὐτοῖς.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.

24 Benjamin Jowett-Lewis Campbell, ed., *Plato's Republic: The Greek Text*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1894), 1:427.

Clem. *Protr.* 10,99,2

Νομίμων δὲ ἀνόμων καὶ ἀπατηλῶν ὑποκρίσεων ἄγνοια αἰτία, [...] κατασκευασθεῖσα τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος κηρῶν ὀλεθρίων καὶ εἰδώλων ἐπιστυγῶν.²⁵

Of blasphemous rites and misleading ceremonies is ignorance the cause, which has placed the origin of disastrous fates and heinous idols among the human kind.

The same refusal of unanimated representations of the Divine can also be observed in the following three verses from the above-mentioned epigram that Leo V allegedly inscribed under the Cross in 814:

<p>Ἄφωνον εἶδος, καὶ πνοῆς ἐξηρμένον Χριστὸν γράφεσθαι μὴ φέρων ὁ δεσπότης "Υλῆ γεηρᾶ ταῖς γραφαῖς πατουμένη."²⁶</p>	<p>The emperor prohibits Christ from being represented as an image without voice and afflatus, in the form of an earthly material, which has already been condemned in the Scriptures.</p>
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The theological apex of the iconoclastic theology was reached under Constantine V's rule, who succeeded Leo III. During the Council of Hieria in 754, he presented the *Πεύσεις*, which were actual theological writings consisting of the outcomes of organized meetings of the clergy, and are preserved by Patriarch Nikephoros' *Antirrhetikoi*, dating back to the end of the 8th century.²⁷ The contribution of the *Πεύσεις* is essential: they transferred the matter of aniconism from the rather concrete level of the danger of idolatry, to the theoretical and properly theological perspective of Christological heresy.

Constantine's argumentation is articulated in three phases:²⁸ 1) the image and the subject represented, the archetype, are consubstantial; 2) since Christ is consubstantial with the Father and the Father cannot be circumscribed in

25 Claude Mondésert, ed., *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le protreptique* (3rd ed. Paris, 1976), p. 167.

26 PG 96:437.

27 Emanuela Fogliadini, *L'immagine negata: Il Concilio di Hieria e la formalizzazione ecclesiale dell'iconoclasmo* (Milano, 2013), pp. 118–27.

28 Leslie Barnard, "The Theology of Images", in *Iconoclasm: Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. A. Bryer-J. Herrin (Birmingham, 1977), p. 13.

space, then, nor can Christ be circumscribed in an image; 3) the only possible images are, therefore, the Eucharist, the Cross, and the Church. The Eucharistic bread and wine are admissible because Christ stated: “Take, eat, this is my body” (Mt. 26:26); the consubstantiality of divinity and matter is, therefore, documented in the Scriptures.

The Cross, as a symbol of death and ultimate resurrection, is the only religious symbol that can be graphically represented on an icon. This is how the Cross’s historical significance, dating back to Constantine the Great’s vision, and its theological significance, resulting from the most recent Christological reflections, in the end coincide. The Cross has finally undertaken its role of central and polyhedral symbol. An example of this is seen in the iconoclastic verse also transmitted by Theodore the Studite in his *Refutatio poematum iconomachorum*:

νόμον δέδωκας σταυρὸν ἐγγράφειν μόνον ²⁹	[Verb,] you have decreed that the Cross alone [can be] inscribed.
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The centrality of the Cross during Iconoclasm emerged through this verse not only at a semantic level, but it was also exalted in a structural-rhetorical view: a double chiasmus (noun-verb-verb-noun) encloses the Cross as the principal ideological nexus, while leaving the definition of the Cross at the two extremes with the word *μόνον* taking the place of a categorical closing.

The refusal of the imagery is a recurring feature in the Scripture as well as in the Christian apologetics. Later, during the iconoclast historical-theological framework, the Cross seems to be the only legitimized figurative symbol in the Christian context of Kassia’s time. Due to a) its narratological recurrence, b) its symbolic value in a historical context, and c) its prominent role within the Christian theological debate, we are now ready to hold the Cross as key to the interpretation of Kassia’s cryptic theological leanings.

5 The Holy Cross, Saint Christina, and Kassia’s True Faith

I shall now apply the illustration of the theological value of the Cross to Kassia’s Hymn to Saint Christina. As observed, Christ directly interacts with the saint only when she has already attained martyrdom, has been saved and undertaken the celestial union, which is either about to be celebrated or the celebration has just concluded:

29 PG 96:437.

IV,31–2: τὴν κεφαλὴν δὲ τμηθεῖσα
 χορεύεις ἐν Χριστῷ
 ἀδιαλείπτως πρεσβεύουσα ὑπὲρ τῶν
 ψυχῶν ἡμῶν,

V,34–5: ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης, Χριστός,
 ὡς ἀμόμητόν σε νύμφην ἑαυτῷ
 ἡρμύσατο συναφείᾳ ἀκηράτῳ

V,40–2: διπλῶ στέφει δισσῶς σε
 κατέστειψε καὶ
 παρέστησεν ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ
 ὡς βασίλισσαν πεποικιλμένην.³⁰

Albeit beheaded, you celebrate danc-
 ing within Christ
 ceaselessly interceding on behalf of
 our souls.

The king of glory, Christ,
 has bound you, immaculate bride,
 to him in a pure union.

With a dual crown he has garlanded
 you and
 placed you at his right hand,
 as a radiant queen.

Nevertheless, as long as Christina still finds herself on this mortal sphere and facing the agony of martyrdom, Christ is never represented as a *helper* directly, present at the side of the saint in the act of consulting with her, giving her a *magical object*, or whispering words of support. The Cross is, instead, always present by her side and it takes the place of a mighty weapon (ὄπλον κραταιόν), an inexhaustible force (δύναμις). Standing in Christ's stead at Christina's side, the Cross has itself risen to the role of *helper* – a sort of ἀνιγμα ('figure/symbol/sign') of Christ.

In light of these historical and historical-theological considerations, this total absence of the person or figure of Christ, placed beside the constant and fortifying presence of the Cross, can find a possible explanation in the current of aniconism that reigned within art and literature in the 8th and 9th centuries.

Although Kassia is known and described by the sources as a devotee of the Iconodules, we can discern in the epistles allegedly sent to her by Theodore the Studite several factors that make us question not only Kassia's actual faith and support of religious images, but also if it is correct to attribute this hymn to the composer herself.³¹ While initially praising her writing skills and her iconophile vocation, in fact, one cannot fail to notice, in a later epistle, Theodore's disappointment towards Kassia due to her alleged negligence in matters of faith.³²

30 Tripolitis, *Kassia*, pp. 57–61.

31 Georgios Fatouros, ed., *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1992), 1:339–40, 501–2, 813–4.

32 In Theodore's earlier epistles to Kassia (Kassia is still κόρη ἀρτιφύης, namely "new born", meaning "fresh", "very young"), the monk expresses admiration to the future abbess for her precocious good manners (κοσμιότης), her wisdom (τὰ σοφά), and her sagacity (τὰ συνετὰ), in Fatouros, *Epistulae*, 370, 1–4. In a second letter, Theodore thanks Kassia for having helped his spiritual brother Dorotheus, presumably a persecuted iconophile

Besides these clues about Kassia's religious attitude deducible from Theodore the Studite's epistles and the Cross's tendency to take on an iconoclastic *facies* within the hymn to Saint Christina, a third element may call Kassia's true faith into question, namely the presence, in the same hymn, of a verse characterized by a clear anti-iconic "tone":

<p>Ι,3-4: ὅτι καὶ γυναῖκες κατήργησαν τὴν πλάνην τῆς εἰδωλομανίας</p> <p>δυνάμει τοῦ σταυροῦ σου, φιλόανθρωπε.³³</p>	<p>Since even women have repudi- ated the untruth of the idolatrous insanity, by the strength of your Cross, friend of mankind.</p>
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The term εἰδωλομανίας seems to be related to the semantic scope of the iconoclastic debate, in that the followers of iconoclastic faith accused the iconodules of venerating idols. A second plausible hypothesis sees Kassia as carrying out a type of *recusatio* against the accusation of idolatry made by the iconoclasts against those who venerated icons: this accusation would be false in that the women repudiated idolatry by practicing devotion to true image worship. This second hypothesis seems nonetheless slightly forced and would seem to contradict the other two factors, namely Theodore's alleged disappointment toward Kassia and the anti-iconic aspect of the Cross.

The last significant element is the ambiguous attribution of the various stanzas. According to the work of Ilse Rochow and to the manuscript tradition, each of the five verses has been attributed to more than one author.³⁴ The ascriptions reported by the codices present the names of various authors that were active between the 8th and 9th centuries: Cyprian, Byzantius, John of Damascus, Anatolius, and George of Nicomedia, among others.³⁵ This uncommon mixture of attributions could be an interesting circumstance to look into. Silvia Ronchey, in reference to the *Pentecostal Iambic Canon* attributed to John of Damascus, hypothesized that some hymns dating from the iconoclastic period have survived the period of iconodule restoration by their attribution to irreproachable orthodox authors.³⁶

monk (Fatouros, *Epistle*, 217, 5–6). But, in a later epistle (Fatouros, *Epistle*, 539, 25–8), he reproaches both Kassia's and her sister's negligence in not having baptized a dying *stratēgos*, who was an iconoclastic militant, to the true faith, namely the iconophile one. See also Lauxtermann, *Notes*, p. 394.

33 Tripolitis, *Kassia*, p. 57.

34 For a detailed catalogue of Kassia's manuscript tradition, see Rochow, *Studien*, p. 34–58.

35 Rochow, *Studien*, p. 54.

36 Silvia Ronchey, "Those whose writings were exchanged: John of Damascus, George Choeroboscus and John 'Arklas' according to the Prooimion of Eustathius' Exegesis in

If Silvia Ronchey's hypothesis were applicable in the case of Kassia's debated authorship, it would mean that few verses of some iconoclastic hymnographers have been safely preserved under the name of a high-ranking iconodule abbess. This issue will remain unsolved, for now. One will more confidently try to give an answer to the fascinating question of the authenticity only while thoroughly working on a critical edition of Kassia's hymnographical production.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, I will sum up the core argument of my contribution. From the narratological-structural viewpoint, in Kassia's Hymn to Saint Christina the Cross plays the role of the *magical object*, given by Christ to the Saint as a theological weapon to unsheathe against the demons.

When it comes to historical events, the Cross takes on an emblematic function within specific crucial phases or circumstances. Constantine's vision of the Cross on the eve of the battle of the Milvian Bridge is a historical turning point and the Cross is regarded as a holy weapon as well as in the Hymn to Saint Christina. During the iconoclastic Era, which is both Kassia's time and another historical turning point, the Cross is more or less officially adopted as a symbol for the new theological tendency and replaces, among all others, Christ's image.

Finally, the aniconism of those years seems to be reflected in Kassia's hymn to Saint Christina, where two elements would hint at Kassia's possible noticonophile tendency. First, both the total absence of interaction between Christ and Christina while still in an earthly dimension, and the consequent replacement of Christ's direct help with the mediation of the Cross seem to be a consequence of Christ's unrepresentability, typical of the iconoclastic controversy. Furthermore, Kassia's explicit condemnation of the εἰδωλομανία (idolatry) also corresponds to one of the most common iconoclastic arguments against the veneration of icons.

Unfortunately, we do not have yet more evidences supporting the challenging idea of a hidden aspect of Kassias's religious leaning. Nevertheless, the *excursus* on the trail of the Holy Cross has allowed us to highlight its symbolic

Canonem Iambicum de Pentecoste", in *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine history and culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, ed. Claudia Sode and Sarolta Takács (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 327–36. Silvia Ronchey, "An introduction to Eustathios' *Exegesis in Canonem Iambicum*", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991), pp. 150–8. Ronchey's thesis has been criticized by Dimitrios Skrekas in *Studies in the Iambic Canon attributed to John of Damascus: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary*, 1–11 (Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford 2008, in print), p. 3:

and fundamental role within some historical turning points. Furthermore, by means of the features of the Cross traced throughout our narratological, historical, and theological analysis, it has been possible to shed new light on essential aspects and questions concerning both Kassia's true faith and the authorship of some verses attributed to her.

Reading Kassias's verses, therefore, can be inspirational as well as intriguing. As the poet herself writes in one of her γνῶμαι, "a monk is an established book, showing the model to be imitated and teaching at the same time".³⁷ While yearning to lose ourselves in her βιβλίον and her literary universe, we are still missing the philological tools in order to fully decipher them. This does not, however, prevent us from admiring her verses and being fascinated by its figurative network and by the ἀνιγμὰ of the Cross.³⁸

"Though intriguing, concepts associated with iconoclasm cannot be identified easily in any of the three canons. There exist considerable 'iconophile' interferences in our text. It is therefore possible to surmise that had the canons been produced by an iconoclast poet, he would hardly have left such ambivalent allusions in his text".

37 Tripolitis, *Kassia*, p. 137: «Μοναχὸς ἐστὶ καθίστορον βιβλίον δεικνύον ὁμοῦ τοὺς τύπους καὶ διδάσκον».

38 Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to John. From the very first draft of the abstract till the last lines of the end version, he has been constantly present, even if just as a thought. He is my ἄπλον and my δύναμις.

Tzetzes, Eustathius, and the ‘City-Sacker’ Epeius: Trends and Turning Points in the 12th-century Reception of Homer

Valeria Flavia Lovato

Who is the best of the Achaeans? This question, already embedded in the narrative of the Homeric poems, has captivated generations of scholars, from the ancient commentators on Homer to some of the most prominent classicists of our times. The present paper will focus on the Byzantines’ contribution to this age-old debate. More specifically, it will compare and contrast the approaches of two of the most important scholars of 12th-century Byzantium, John Tzetzes and Eustathius of Thessaloniki. Whereas Eustathius seems to accept and expand what we might define as the ‘mainstream’ interpretation, Tzetzes adopts an original stance, which represents a significant turning point in the Byzantine reception of the Homeric poems.

Since Homeric times, the two favoured candidates for the title of the best of the Achaeans have been Achilles and Odysseus. It is a passage from the *Odyssey* that suggests these two illustrious ‘nominations’, when the blind bard Demodocus sings about an obscure quarrel involving the two heroes, who are clearly presented as the ‘best’ (*aristoi*) amongst the Greek chieftains:

But when they had put from them the desire for food and drink, the Muse moved the minstrel to sing of the glorious deeds of men, from that lay of which the fame had then reached broad heaven, (75) the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, son of Peleus, how once they strove with violent words at a rich feast of the gods, and Agamemnon, king of men, was glad at heart that the best of the Achaeans were quarrelling [ὁ τ’ ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο]; for thus Phoebus Apollo, in giving his response, had told him that it should be, (80) in sacred Pytho, when he crossed the threshold of stone to inquire of the oracle. For then the beginning of woe was rolling upon Trojans and Danaans alike through the will of great Zeus.¹

¹ Homerus, *Odyssea* 8.72–82, ed. P. von der Mühl (Basel, 1962); trans. A.T. Murray, revised by G.E. Dimock. Unless stated otherwise, all other translations are mine.

The interpretation of these verses was debated by Alexandrian scholars, who were especially interested in the cause of the disagreement. Some scholia that might go back to Aristarchus himself² connect this Homeric passage to a tradition of unknown origin, according to which Achilles and Odysseus disagreed about the strategy for conquering Troy. The son of Peleus was in favour of a direct attack, whereas Odysseus preferred cunning and guile:

νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος] φασὶ τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι χρωμένῳ περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον τέλους ἀνελεῖν τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς Ἀπόλλωνα τότε πορθήσειν τὸ Ἴλιον ὅταν οἱ ἄριστοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων στασιάσωσι. καὶ δὴ παρὰ πότον διαλεχθέντων Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ Ἀχιλλεύς, τοῦ μὲν Ἀχιλλεύς ἀνδρείαν ἐπαινοῦντος τοῦ δὲ Ὀδυσσεὺς σύνεσιν, μετὰ τὴν (5) Ἔκτορος ἀναίρεσιν, ὃ μὲν βιάζεσθαι παρήγει· διὸ καὶ ἀνηρέθη· ὃ δὲ δόλῳ μετελθεῖν. καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονα ὡς τελουμένου τοῦ λογιῶν χαρῆναι (...)³

The quarrel of Odysseus] they say that when Agamemnon consulted the oracle about the outcome of the war, Delphian Apollo said to him in answer that Troy would be sacked when the best of the Greeks should quarrel. Indeed, during drinking a discussion between Odysseus and Achilles had started, where Achilles praised courage and Odysseus praised wisdom, after Hector's death; Achilles recommended the use of force, which is why he was killed, whereas Odysseus suggested having resort to guile. And Agamemnon rejoiced thinking that the oracle was being fulfilled (...)

This exegetic tradition was well known in 12th-century Byzantium. Thanks to the revival of the Homeric poems and the classical tradition, the ancient scholia were rediscovered by intellectuals such as Eustathius of Thessaloniki⁴

2 See Hartmut Erbse, ed., *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (scholia vetera)*, 7 vols (Berlin, 1969–88), schol. A ad Il. 9.347a (Ariston.), 2:471 (which directly refers to *Od.* 8.75 and Demodocus' first song) along with Nagy's remarks (Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore and London, 1979), pp. 24 and 45–6).

3 Wilhelm Dindorf, ed., *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Odysseam ex codicibus aucta et emendata*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1855), schol. HQV ad *Od.* 8.75, 1:361–2. Cf. also *ibid.*, schol. HQ, BE, et Q ad *Od.* 8.77.

4 For Eustathius and his Homeric works see now the introduction to Cullhed's edition of the *Parekbolai* on the *Odyssey* (Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Parekbolai on Homer's Odyssey* 1–2, ed. and trans. Eric Cullhed, PhD dissertation (Uppsala, 2014), pp. 3*–89*). For Eustathius' allegorical interpretation of the poems see especially Paolo Cesaretti, *Allegoristi di Omero a Bisanzio. Ricerche ermeneutiche (XI–XII secolo)* (Milan, 1991), pp. 222–74.

and John Tzetzes,⁵ who not only preserved these texts, but also interacted with them. As I will show, even an apparently neutral discussion of some Homeric epithet could represent for these two exegetes an occasion to express their own standpoint towards their predecessors and contemporaries. In this case, moreover, the different stances taken by the two scholars directly involve the reception of the Homeric poems and their protagonists. Whereas Eustathius generally embraces and develops the dominant exegetic tradition, Tzetzes proposes an original reassessment of the poems, presenting his readers with an interesting counterpoint to his colleague's more institutional views.

1 Eustathius and the 'City-Sacker' Odysseus

Let us then go back to Demodocus' first song and to the quarrel between the two major Homeric heroes. As I have already mentioned, according to the ancient scholia on Homer, Achilles and Odysseus disagreed on the strategy to adopt for conquering Troy. Centuries later, this same explanation would be resumed by Eustathius, who quotes the Homeric scholia almost word for word.

Ἄξιον ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ὅτι χρησαμένῳ τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν Τρωϊκὸν πόλεμον τέλους ἀνεῖλεν ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς Ἀπόλλων, τότε ἀλῶναι τὴν Ἰλιον ὅτε οἱ ἐν Ἀχαιοῖς ἄριστοι καταστασιάσουσι. καὶ ποτε παρὰ θυτικὸν πότον, ἔπαθον τοῦτο Ἀχιλλεύς τε ἀνδρὶα θέλων περιέσεσθαι Τρώων, καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς φρονήσει καὶ δόλῳ συμβουλεύων ἐπιτρέψαι τὸ ἔργον. (40) ὁ καὶ κρεῖττον ἀπέβη εἶγε Ἀχιλλεύς μὲν, πρὸς βίαν ἀνδριζόμενος, πίπτει. Ὀδυσσεὺς δὲ, δόλῳ πτολίπορθος γίνεταί.⁶

Observe that, Agamemnon having consulted the oracle about the outcome of the Trojan war, the Delphian Apollo answered that Troy would be taken when the best among the Achaeans should quarrel. And during a sacrificial banquet this happened to Achilles, who wanted to defeat the Trojans by force, and Odysseus, who suggested to rely upon wisdom and guile. The latter solution turned out to be the best one. Indeed, Achilles, showing his manliness by resorting to force, dies, whereas Odysseus thanks to the use of guile becomes the 'city-sacker'.

5 For a recent overview of Tzetzes' biography and career see Michael Grünbart, "Byzantinisches Gelehrtenelend – oder: Wie meistert man seinen Alltag?" in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, eds. Lars M. Hoffmann and Anuscha Monchizadeh (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 413–26. On the scholar's allegorical reading of Homer see again Cesaretti, *Allegoristi di Omero*, pp. 145–204.

6 Eustathius archiepiscopus Thessalonicensis, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam ad fidem exempli Romani editi*, 1:283, 37–42, ed. Johann Gottfried Stallbaum, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1825–28).

Despite the close resemblance between Eustathius' text and his sources, we can observe that the Byzantine exegete adds a final comment that did not appear in the scholia. Eustathius does not restrict himself to relating the causes of the quarrel, but also discloses its future outcome. In this passage, he makes a point of emphasizing that it was Odysseus – not Achilles – who proved to be right. Force resulted in death and defeat, whereas the clever stratagem of the horse brought victory. And it was thanks to this plan that Odysseus earned the title of *ptoliporthos* (πτολίπορθος), that is sacker of the city, Troy, *par excellence*.⁷

In this excerpt, Eustathius refers to another series of scholia discussing the meaning and uses of *ptoliporthos*. The ancient exegetes seemed puzzled by the fact that Homer awarded this epithet to Achilles only once,⁸ whereas the title was mostly used to refer to Odysseus, especially – but not exclusively – in the *Odyssey*. After all, as the *Iliad* shows, Achilles was essential to the Greek expedition. Moreover, the son of Peleus had actually sacked many cities during the first years of the campaign.⁹ Different solutions were proposed for this apparent inconsistency. The majority of the scholia observe that even if Achilles had conquered many *poleis*, the essential one, Troy, was taken thanks to Odysseus' plans. Hence, the latter was honored with the prestigious epithet more than the former.¹⁰

Further developing this interpretive line, some scholiasts went as far as to 'correct', as not genuinely Homeric, the verse where *ptoliporthos* referred to the son of Peleus.

7 For the meaning of the epithet *ptoliporthos* when referred to Odysseus, see the detailed discussion by Adele J. Haft, "The City-Sacker Odysseus' in *Iliad* 2 and 10," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 120 (1990), 37–56. Haft's convincing interpretation seems to be confirmed by the Homeric scholia and the 12th-century texts here examined.

8 See schol. A ad *Il.* 21.550a (Ariston.), 5:253 Erbse. Actually, as Erbse himself remarks in his critical apparatus, the *Iliad* credited Achilles with the epithet four times (i.e. *Il.* 8.372, 15.77, 21.550, and 24.108). However, we know that Aristarchus himself marked with an *obelos* at least two (8.372 and 15.77) out of these four verses.

9 As the hero himself states in the ninth book of the *Iliad*: see Homer, *Ilias* 9.328, ed. T.W. Allen (Oxford, 1931) along with the two following notes.

10 See for example schol. T ad *Il.* 15.77b (ex.), 4:25 Erbse (πτολίπορθον) Ὀδυσσεά μόνον οὕτω καλεῖ διὰ τὴν Ἴλιον. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ λέγει 'αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' ὡς ἐνόησεν Ἀχιλλεῖα πτολίπορθον' (*Il.* 21.550)· ἐπόρθησε γὰρ εἴκοσι πόλεις) and Filippomaria Pontani, ed., *Scholia Graeca in Odysseam* 1. *Scholia ad libros α-β* (Rome, 2007), schol. DE²JR²⁸ ad *Od.* 1.2h1 (Porph.), pp. 10–1 (ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν] διὰ τί Ὀμηρος οὐ τὸν Ἀχιλλεῖα, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ὀδυσσεά ὀνομάζει πτολίπορθον, καὶ ταῦτα πόλεις ἀπείρους τοῦ Ἀχιλλεῖως πορθήσαντος; ἐπεὶ γὰρ ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς πολίδριά τινα ἐπέσχευ, ὁ δὲ Ὀδυσσεὺς διὰ τῆς οἰκείας φρονήσεως τὴν περιφήμον Τροίαν ἐπόρθησε, δι' ἣν οἱ Ἕλληνες πολλῆς κακοπαθείας μετέσχηκαν κατασχεῖν αὐτὴν θέλοντες, διὰ τοῦτο οὐ τὸν Ἀχιλλεῖα, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ὀδυσσεά ὀνομάζει πτολίπορθον).

Ἀχιλλῆα πτολίπορθον· ὅτι πλεονάζει ἐπ’ Ὀδυσσέως τὸ πτολίπορθος (sc. *Il.* 2.278, 10.363, *Od.* 8.3, et al.), νῦν δὲ ἄπαξ ἐπ’ Ἀχιλλέως (...). τινὲς δὲ Ἀχιλλέα Πηλείωνα’ ποιούσι, ξενισθέντες πρὸς τὸ ἐπίθετον.¹¹

the city-sacker Achilles] Observe that *ptoliporthos* is mostly referred to Odysseus. However, this is the only instance where it denotes Achilles (...). Some interpreters, puzzled by this epithet, modify this verse into ‘Achilles son of Peleus’.

Eustathius, who is always careful not to alter the Homeric text improperly, does not accept this extreme solution. In his commentaries, however, he repeatedly quotes and further develops other aspects of the scholiasts’ interpretation. Once, for example, he seems to imply that, even if the son of Peleus technically was a sacker of cities and could therefore be thus defined, it was Odysseus who accomplished the major deed by conquering Troy, the ‘crucial city’ (κορυφαία πόλις). Nevertheless, according to Eustathius, Homer loved Achilles exceedingly, and so he sometimes honors him with the prestigious epithet.

Ὅρα δὲ καὶ ὡς ἐπιτηδεῖως παρέρριψεν ὁ ποιητῆς κἀνταῦθα (sc. *Il.* 8.372) τὴν τοῦ φιλουμένου αὐτῷ (15) Ἀχιλλέως μνήμην, ὡς μυριαχοῦ ποιεῖ. Καὶ ὅτι πτολίπορθον τὸν Ἀχιλλέα λέγει, ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς που ἐρεῖ, διὰ τὰς πολλὰς <πόλεις>, ἃς εἶλεν, ὡς αὐτὸς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ δηλώσει. Πολέμαρχος γὰρ ὢν αὐτὸς αἰτίαν εἶχε τῶν πορθουμένων πόλεων. Ὀδυσσεὺς μέντοι πτολίπορθος διὰ μίαν λεχθήσεται κορυφαίαν πόλιν, τὴν Ἴλιον, ἥτις, ὡς ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐα λέγεται, (20) τῇ τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως ἦλω βουλή.¹²

Remark how carefully the poet has inserted here too (sc. *Il.* 8.372) a mention of his beloved Achilles, as he does in countless other instances. And observe that he calls Achilles ‘city-sacker’ – as he will do again somewhere later on – because of the many cities conquered by the hero, as

11 Schol. A ad *Il.* 21.550a (Ariston.), 5:253 Erbse. Cf. also schol. T ad *Il.* 21.550b (ex.): Ἀχιλλῆα πτολίπορθον] τινὲς Ἀχιλλέα Πηλείωνα’, πρὸς τὸ ἐπίθετον ξενισθέντες. ἀλλ’ ἤδη αὐτὸς εἶπε ἑξήδεκα δὴ σὺν νηυσὶ πόλεις ἀλάπαξα’ (*Il.* 9.328). ἐπὶ δὲ Ὀδυσσέως πλεονάζει τῷ ἐπιθέτῳ διὰ τὴν Ἴλιου πόρθησιν (*the city-sacker Achilles]* Some interpreters, puzzled by this epithet, write ‘Achilles son of Peleus’. But Achilles himself had formerly claimed: “Twelve cities of men have I laid waste with my ships” (*Il.* 9.328, trans. A.T. Murray). Nevertheless, the epithet is more frequently referred to Odysseus because of the sacking of Troy).

12 Eustathius archiepiscopus Thessalonicensis, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes* 2:600, 14–21, ed. Marchinus van der Valk, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1971–87).

Achilles himself will show while talking about his own accomplishments. Being the commander of the troops, he was the one who was credited with sacking the cities. Odysseus, by contrast, will be called ‘city-sacker’ because of one crucial city, Troy, which, as the *Odyssey* itself recounts, was taken thanks to Odysseus’ plan.

Let us now go back to the passage where Eustathius commented upon Demodocus’ first song and the mysterious quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus. In that text, the scholar did not just quote the scholia narrating the cause of the disagreement between the ‘best’ (*aristoi*) of the Achaeans, but he also connected that tradition with the debate revolving around the epithet *ptoliporthos* – a connection that did not feature in his sources. By establishing this link, Eustathius seems to suggest that the best of the Achaeans is also the hero who found the right strategy to conquer Troy, thus making a major contribution to the final success of the Greeks. The hero who deserves to be called *ptoliporthos* is also the best of the Achaeans and this hero happens to be Odysseus, who not only survived the war, but also devised the best strategy to win it.

2 Tzetzes the Outsider and the ‘City-Sacker’ Epeius

The impression that the debate on this Homeric epithet was to the Byzantine exegetes much more significant than it might appear is further strengthened by the writings of John Tzetzes. Unfortunately, only a minor part of his *Exegesis of the Iliad* has been preserved. Therefore, I will have to restrict my analysis to some of his poetic works, starting from the *Carmina Iliaca*, a hexametric poem devoted to recounting the true story of the capture of Troy.

In this poem, the term *ptoliporthos* appears only three times, all the instances featuring in the first section, dedicated to the episodes preceding the *Iliad*. If we keep in mind what we have just observed with regard to Eustathius and the Homeric scholia, we cannot help but be surprised to see that in the *Carmina Iliaca* the term is never applied to Odysseus. On the contrary, in two instances out of three, Tzetzes attributes the prestigious title to Achilles.¹³ What is more,

¹³ See Ioannes Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca* 1.282-84, ed. Petrus Aloisius M. Leone (Catania, 1995), p. 19: τὴν Μυσοῖ τε καὶ Ἀργεῖοι στενάχοντο πεσοῦσαν, | τόσσοι δὲ θρήνος περὶ κάλλει ὄρετο ταύτης, | Τηλέφω ὡς σπείσασθαι Ἀχιλλῆα πτολίπορθον. (When she (sc. Hiera) fell the Mysians and the Argives mourned her, | and so deep was the lament over her beauty | that the city-sacker Achilles made a truce with Telephus) and 1.303-305, p. 20: τῷ καὶ ὄλεθρον ἔτευξε δολοφροσύνησι νόοιο, | Ἀργείοις δ’ ἐχόλωσεν Ἀχιλλῆα πτολίπορθον, | λοιμὸν δὲ στονόεντα κατὰ στρατὸν ὤρσε φέρεσθαι. (For him (sc. Palamedes) Odysseus wrought ruin through the

by clearly connecting the epithet with the many cities conquered by the hero,¹⁴ the scholar is at the same time echoing and challenging the Homeric scholia, especially those suggesting to 'correct' the verses where the son of Peleus was called 'city-sacker'.

Being not only a *grammatikos* but also a talented poet – as the scholar himself states in the introductory scholium to his poem¹⁵ – Tzetzes has every right to confront both Homer and his interpreters, thus finally disclosing to his readers the true story of the war of Troy. Indeed, the *Carmina Iliaca* often emphasizes the importance of Achilles' contribution to the Greek expedition: with the help of Palamedes, who was able to guide and restrain him, the son of Peleus sacked more cities than all the other Greek warriors. Elsewhere, Tzetzes also seems to suggest that, again with the guidance of the wise son of Nauplius, Achilles could have easily conquered Troy as well. Unfortunately, the envious Odysseus separated the two heroes and killed Palamedes, thus causing the crisis that would soon affect the Greek army.

What is even more compelling, however, is the third instance of *ptoliporthos*, which features in an exceptionally meaningful section of the *Carmina Iliaca*, namely its proem. After invoking the Muse in accordance with the epic conventions, Tzetzes lists the topics he will deal with in his work, starting from the birth of Paris to end with the fall of Troy. It is in this context that our third instance of *ptoliporthos* appears. This time, however, the epithet is applied neither to Achilles nor to Odysseus:

Ἀργαλέου πολέμοιο μέγαν πόνον Ἰλιακοῖο
 ἔννεπε, Καλλιόπεια, ὕφ' ἡμετέρησιν αἰοδαῖς,
 ἀρχῆθε δ' ἐπάειδε καὶ ἐς τέλος ἐξερέεινε,
 ἐξ ὅτεο Πρίαμος λοιγὸν Τρώεσσι φυτεύει
 Δύσπαριν οὐλόμενον, ἀρχὴν πολέμοιο κακοῖο,
 τὴν νόος οὐκ ἐρέεινεν Ὀμήρου κυδαλίμοιο.
 ἔννεπε δ' Ἀργείης Ἑλένης ἐρόεσσαν ὀπωπὴν,
 πῶς τέ μιν ἦγεν Ἀλέξανδρος Σπάρτηθε Τροίην.
 ἔννεπε δὲ πλόον Ἑλλήνων καὶ νῆας ἀπάσας·
 εἰπέ δὲ Πηλείδαο κότον καὶ ὄλεθρον Ἀχαιῶν,
 Σαρπηδόντος Πατρόκλου τε καὶ Ἑκτορος οἶτον·
 εἰπέ δὲ Πενθεσίλειαν, κούρην ἀντιάνειραν.

many guiles of his mind, | against the Argives he aroused the anger of the city-sacker Achilles | and he caused a plague fraught with groans to strike the army).

14 It is no coincidence that both instances appear in the first part of the *Carmina Iliaca*, an important section of which is devoted to recounting the campaigns that the Greeks (and especially Achilles) led against the cities siding with Priam.

15 See Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca*, p. 101, Leone.

ἔννεπε δ' Αἰθιοπῶν στρατὸν υἷά τε Ἑριγενείης.
 φράζεο δ' Αἰακίδαο πότμον δακρυόεντα·
 Εὐρύπυλόν τε ἄειδε καὶ υἷα Αἰακίδαο
 μαντείας θ' Ἑλένου καὶ Ἀλεξάνδροιο φονῆα.
 εἰπέ δὲ καὶ πτολίπορθον Ἐπειοῦ δούρεον ἵππον,
 εἰσόκεν ἤϊστωσε πελώρια τείχεα Τροίης.
 ταῦτά μοι εὐπατέρεια, Διὸς τέκος, ἔννεπε Μοῦσα.¹⁶

Tell the great toil of the troublous Trojan war | through our songs, o Calliope, | sing it from the beginning and continue to the end, | since the time when Priam begot to the Trojans their ruin, | the accursed Dusparis, the origin of the evil war, | that the mind of the glorious Homer did not recount. | Tell of the lovely appearance of Argive Helen, | of how Alexander brought her from Sparta to Troy. | Tell of the crossing of the Greeks and of all of their ships. | Tell of the wrath of Peleus' son and of the destruction of the Achaeans, | of Sarpedon, Patroclus and of Hector's doom. | Tell of Penthesileia, the maiden fighting against men. | Tell of the Ethiopian army and of Erigeneia's son. | Recount the tearful fate of the Aeacid. | Sing of Eurypylos and of the Aeacid's son, | of Helenos' prophecies and of he who killed Alexander. | Tell of the Wooden Horse, the sacker of cities, that Epeius built, | until the time when it destroyed the mighty walls of Troy. | These tell me, o Muse, child of Zeus, daughter of a noble sire.

As we can see, in this passage it is the Wooden Horse which is granted the prestigious title. The famous stratagem had always been associated with Odysseus, who was credited with the invention of the Horse by Homer himself.¹⁷ We might therefore be tempted to conclude that, by extending the much discussed epithet to the Horse, Tzetzes intends to honor its inventor, conforming for once to the prevailing exegetic tradition. If we pay closer attention to the phrasing of the verse, however, we note that it is carefully structured in order to give prominence to a character generally neglected by the epic accounts, that is Epeius, the craftsman who actually built the Horse. It has been remarked that in the *Odyssey* the scarce mentions of this peculiar hero are always marginal and, what is more, that they are constantly confined to relative clauses.¹⁸ The very syntax contributed to stress Epeius' secondary role in

16 Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca*, 1.1-19, Leone.

17 See Hom., *Od.* 4.266-89, 22.230, and 13.387-88. These passages are discussed by Patrick J. Finglass, "How Stesichorus Began His *Sack of Troy*," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 185 (2013), 1-17: 8.

18 See Hom. *Od.* 8.492-95 and 11.523-25 along with Finglass, "How Stesichorus Began," p. 8.

the conception of the Horse, which Homer presented as the result of Odysseus' cleverness.¹⁹ The opening of the *Carmina Iliaca*, by contrast, follows a different agenda. Not only is Odysseus completely absent from the proem, but his highest accomplishment – the wooden Horse – is unmistakably linked to the name of Epeius. What is more, the verse is deliberately phrased so as to connect Epeius not only with the realization of the Horse, but also with the result it brought, that is the capture of Troy. By collocating the hero's name between the epithet *ptoliporthos* and the mention of the Horse, Tzetzes is suggesting that the capture of Troy was chiefly the outcome of Epeius' initiative.²⁰

These impressions are further strengthened by other passages from Tzetzes' Homeric works, where the scholar's original standpoint emerges even more clearly.²¹ Let us skip the first phases of the war and focus directly on the moment when the decisive stratagem was finally conceived. In this case also, Tzetzes might at first appear to follow the prevailing tradition, acknowledging Odysseus' leading role:

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- 19 The *Odyssey* is not the only text to give prominence to Odysseus. The majority of the ancient sources equally present the son of Laertes as the one who devised the clever stratagem and put it into effect, whereas Epeius is mentioned only as the builder of the Horse (see e.g. Menander, *Kolax*, 123–4 Sandbach, [Apollodorus], *Epitome* 5.14 Wagner, Polyaeus, *Strategemata* 1 praef. 9–10 Melber-Woelfflin, and Philostratus, *Heroicus* 34.2 de Lannoy; cf. also Finglass, "How Stesichorus Began," pp. 8–10). The only exception to this trend was Stesichorus' *Sack of Troy*, where Epeius played a major role, as shown by Finglass, "How Stesichorus began," pp. 7–10. On the originality of Stesichorus see also idem, "Simias and Stesichorus," *Eikasmos* 26 (2015), 197–202.
- 20 Tzetzes further underlines Epeius' importance by mentioning him in a particularly climactic position, that is at the very end of the invocation. Similarly, Stesichorus made Epeius prominent by putting him *first* in his *Sack of Troy*: see Malcom Davies and Patrick J. Finglass, eds. and trans., *Stesichorus: The Poems*, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 54 (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 134–5 (frag. 100) and 414–9. I wish to thank Patrick Finglass for pointing this out to me.
- 21 Tzetzes' interest in Epeius is evident also in his later *Allegories of the Iliad*: see Ioannes Tzetzes, *Allegoriae Iliadis*, ed. Jean François Boissonade (Paris, 1851). In the introduction to this work, not only Tzetzes states that it was Epeius who should be credited with the sack of Troy (*prolegomena* 655–8), but he also constructs his own portrait of the hero-craftsman (as he had already done in his *Carmina Iliaca*: see Georgios A. Zachos, "Epeios in Greece and Italy. Two Different Traditions in One Person," *Athenaeum* 101/1 (2013), 5–23: 22; Zachos, however, does not mention the description of Epeius featuring in the *Allegories of the Iliad*, *prolegomena* 740–3). To be sure, Epeius' description did not appear in the traditional catalogue of *eikonismoi*, which probably originated in the Greek version of Dictys' *Ephemerides* and was handed down to the Byzantines through Malalas' *Chronicle* (for this curious gallery of portraits and its differing traditions, see Peter Grossardt, "Die Kataloge der troischen Kriegsparteien" in *Approches de la Troisième Sophistique. Hommages à Jacques Schamp*, ed. Eugenio Amato, Collection Latomus 296 (Brussels, 2006), pp. 449–57).

Ἦς δ' ἄρα καὶ τότε πρῆσβειήν Τρώων ἀποπέμψας,
 μήδετο ἀγκυλόβουλος Τρώϊον ἡμίσει ἄστῃ,
 καὶ δὴ δουράτεον μέγαν ἵππον ἐκέκλετο τεύξαι.
 αὐτίκα δ' Αἰακίδης περιδέξιός εἶπεν Ἐπειός·
 ὄϊτος ἐμός γε ἄεθλος, ὑμεῖς δέ μοι ἄξετε ὕλην'.

Even at that moment, after sending back the Trojan ambassadors, | the wily Odysseus planned to destroy the city of Troy | and so he ordered to build a huge wooden horse. | But the very dexterous Epeius, descendant of Aeacus, immediately exclaimed: | “This task belongs to me; as for you, you will bring me the wood”.²²

This excerpt is preceded by one of the most violent invectives that Tzetzes ever addresses to the much-hated son of Laertes:

ἐν τὸδ' ἐπισταμένως τε καὶ ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω,
 ὡς ἄρ' ἔην ἀγνώμων ἠδὲ δόλων ὑποεργός,
 ὃς καὶ δειλὸς ἐὼν ἀνὴρ πολέμοισι γεγήθει.²³

Just this one thing I will say truthfully and in full knowledge of the facts: | that he (sc. Odysseus) was heartless and devoted to trickery | and that, despite being a coward, he rejoiced in war.

As we can see, the cause of the scholar's attack is, along with the hero's cowardice, his notorious inclination for trickery and cunning. It is no coincidence that such an invective features right before the mention of the most famous among Odysseus' tricks. Moreover, it is important to remark that, as soon as the son of Laertes hints at his plan, the spotlight instantly shines on Epeius: the hero-craftsman immediately takes the initiative and starts leading his comrades, who are instructed to collect the wood necessary for the realization of the Horse.

Tzetzes appears to have carefully constructed his text to serve his agenda. The peculiar structure of the whole episode aims both at debasing Odysseus and at exalting Epeius. By attacking the son of Laertes for his treachery and by crediting him with the initial conception of the plan, Tzetzes not only censures the hero's despicable behavior but also makes it clear that Odysseus is the only

²² Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca*, 3.629-33, Leone.

²³ *Ibid.* 626-8.

one to be held responsible for the deceptive aspect of the plan. Epeius is thus cleared from the charge of duplicity and deception.²⁴

Furthermore, the way in which Epeius takes the lead and directs the other Greek warriors seems to contradict a widespread tradition claiming that the hero-craftsman held a low position amongst the Achaeans and was therefore used to carrying out menial tasks, such as drawing water and collecting wood.²⁵ More specifically, here Tzetzes might be reversing a specific version of the story – attested also by the Latin Dictys²⁶ – according to which, when it came to building the Horse, it was Epeius himself who had to pick up the wood.

Finally, I would like to focus on the prestigious patronymic that, in this passage, immediately precedes the name of Epeius, namely *Aiakides* (Αἰακίδης), 'descendant of Aeacus'. According to Tzetzes, therefore, the builder of the Horse belonged to the same line as Achilles, Ajax and Neoptolemus, as a long scholium to the *Carmina Iliaca* is at pains to demonstrate.²⁷ We might recall that in the first verses of the poem, Epeius' name was similarly linked to that of his more famous 'relatives', namely Achilles and the latter's son Neoptolemus. The same strategy informs also an interesting passage from Tzetzes' *Theogonia*, where Epeius is once more carefully included in the group of the great Aeacids.

ἦν Ἀχιλλεύς ὁ κράτιστος ἀπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων,
 υἱὸς θεᾶς τῆς Θέτιδος, ἀνθρώπου δὲ Πηλέως· (595)
 (...)
 παῖς ἦν ὠραῖος Ἀχιλλεῖ ἐκ τῆς Δηϊδαμείας,
 ὁ πυρρὸς Νεοπτόλεμος, ὃς τις πορθεῖ τὴν Τροίαν.

- 24 Interestingly, Tzetzes does not deny the usual distinction between Odysseus 'the thinker' and Epeius 'the builder', but he draws on this very motif to further stress the treacherousness of the former and the centrality of the latter.
- 25 Stesichorus might have been the first to represent Epeius as a water-carrier for the Atreidae (see Finglass, "How Stesichorus Began," pp. 10–13 and Simon Hornblower, *Lykophron: Alexandra. Greek Text, Translation, Commentary, and Introduction* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 348–9. However, as Hornblower remarks, a menial role for Epeius appears to have featured in epic even earlier, as attested by a famous relief from Samothrace (c. 550–25 B.C.), which depicts Epeius and Talthylus attending to a seated Agamemnon.
- 26 Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeridos Belli Troiani libri sex* 5.9, ed. Ferdinandus Meister (Leipzig, 1872), p. 94.
- 27 See schol. ad *Carmina Iliaca*, 3.632, p. 239, 1–9, Leone: Ἐπειὸς· Διὸς καὶ Αἰγίνης τῆς Ἀσωποῦ θυγατρὸς Αἰακός, Αἰακοῦ καὶ <Ἐν>δηΐδος τῆς Σκείρωνος Πηλεὺς καὶ Τελαμών καὶ Φῶκος ἐκ Ψαμάθης τῆς Νηρηΐδος. Πηλέως καὶ Θέτιδος Ἀχιλλεύς. Τελαμώνος καὶ Ἐριβοίας Αἴας, ἐκ δ' Ἡσιόνης Τεῦκρος. Φῶκος καὶ Ἀστεροδίας Κρίσσοσ καὶ Πανοπεύς. Ἀχιλλέως καὶ Δηϊδαμείας Νεοπτόλεμος. Αἴαντος καὶ Λυσιδίης τῆς Κορῶνου Φίλιος, ἐκ Τεκμήσης δὲ Εὐρυσάκης. Πανοπέως δὲ καὶ Λαγαρείας υἱὸς Ἐπειὸς ὁ μηχανουργός. οὗτος ἐξ Αἰακοῦ καταηγμένος.

ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι κράτιστοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων (605)
 Αἶαξ ὁ Τελαμώνιος, πύργος ἐμψυχωμένος,
 καὶ τούτου Τεῦκρος ἀδελφός, υἱοὶ τοῦ Τελαμώνος
 καὶ Ἀχιλλέως συγγενεῖς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφοπαίδων.
 ὁ γὰρ Πηλεὺς ἦν ἀδελφὸς καὶ Τελαμών καὶ Φῶκος,
 καὶ Φῶκος μὲν ἐγέννησεν υἱὸν τὸν Πανοπέα, (610)
 οὗ Πανοπέως Ἐπειός, ἀνὴρ ἀριστοτέχνης,
 ὃς τις τοῖς Ἑλλησι ποιεῖ τὸν δούρειον τὸν ἵππον.²⁸

Achilles was the mightiest of all the Greeks, | he was the son of a goddess, Thetis, and of a mortal, Peleus. | (...) | Achilles had a beautiful son through Deidameia, | the red-haired Neoptolemus, the sacker of Troy. | There were other warriors, the mightiest of the Greeks: | the Telamonian Ajax, the living tower, | and his brother, Teucer. They were both sons of Telamon | and related to Achilles, being the children of two brothers. | For Peleus, Telamon and Phocus were brothers, | and Phocus begot a son, Panopeus, | whose son was Epeius, a man of excellent craft, | the one who built the wooden Horse for the Greeks.

We might note, in passing, that in this excerpt the title of ‘sacker of Troy’ is indirectly given to another descendant of Aeacus, namely Achilles’ son Neoptolemus. One cannot shake off the impression that here Tzetzes is presenting the joint efforts of Epeius and Neoptolemus as a sort of faint replica of the formidable collaboration between Palamedes and Achilles, who would have conquered Troy long before, if Odysseus had not interfered.

Indeed, this association between the builder of the Horse and Achilles’ son has been carefully orchestrated. By pairing the two heroes and awarding them both the title of *ptoliporthoi*, Tzetzes is undermining Odysseus’ role through the celebration of the warriors who, after the death of Palamedes, Achilles, and Ajax, could be considered as his principal rivals. To be more precise, Tzetzes is clearly suggesting that it is Epeius who should be credited with the realization of the Horse, whereas Neoptolemus, the first hero to get inside the Horse,²⁹ is the one who excelled in the final battle and actually sacked Troy.

28 Ioannes Tzetzes, *Theogonia (ex codice Casanatensi)* 594–5; 603–12, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Berlin, 1841).

29 Cf. Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca*, 3.643, Leone.

3 Odysseus the Leader: Troy's Last Day According to Homer and Eustathius

This potential rivalry between Odysseus on the one hand, and Neoptolemus and Epeius on the other, seems to be hinted at by the *Odyssey* itself. More precisely, the *Nekyia*, where Odysseus meets the souls of his dead comrades, underlines the superiority of the crafty hero to the other Greek warriors.³⁰ In his encounter with Achilles, for example, Odysseus, albeit apparently praising Neoptolemus' accomplishments to please the son of Peleus, keeps the focus on his own exploits. More precisely, after dismissively mentioning Epeius' contribution to the plan, Odysseus goes on to stress his own leading role, claiming that he was the one in command of the best of the Achaeans, Neoptolemus included, and declaring that on the day of the sack everything was under his control: “ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπὶ πάντ' ἐτέταλτο”.³¹

When he comments on this passage, Eustathius embraces the Odyssean perspective. According to him, no one else could have been in charge of such a crucial mission. Being the wisest of all heroes, Odysseus was even in control of the 'doors' of the Horse, which he opened when he deemed it most appropriate, despite Neoptolemus' insistence. Paraphrasing the hero, Eustathius acknowledges that, on Troy's last day, everything was under Odysseus' control:

οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἵππῳ ἐπετέταλτο τῷ Ὀδυσσεὶ πάντα, ἡγουν καὶ κλείσαι καὶ ἀνοίξαι τοῖς ἀριστεύουσιν ὅτε καιρὸς. διὸ καὶ ὁ Νεοπτόλεμος αὐτὸν μάλα ἰκέτευεν ἐξελεῖν, φρονίμῳ δὲ πάντως ἀνδρὶ, ὁποῖος καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς, τὸ τοιοῦτον ἔργον ἔπρεπε, ἡγουν τὸ ὡσανεὶ πυλωρεῖν ἐν τῷ δουρεῖω ἵππῳ.³²

Thus, also inside the Horse, Odysseus was in command of everything, which means that he also decided when it was time to close it and then open it again for the best (of the Achaeans). That is why even Neoptolemus had to beg him for permission to get out. Such an important task – namely being, so to say, the doorkeeper of the Wooden Horse – befitted a very wise man like Odysseus.

30 See for example Anthony T. Edwards, *Achilles in the Odyssey: Ideologies of Heroism in the Homeric Epic* (Königstein, 1985), pp. 59–67 and Hanna M. Roisman, “The appropriation of a son: Sophocles' *Philoctetes*,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 38/2 (1997), 127–71: 131–6.

31 See Hom. *Od.* 11.523–27: αὐτὰρ ὅτ' εἰς ἵππον κατεβαίνομεν, ὃν κάμ' Ἐπειός, | Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι, ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπὶ πάντ' ἐτέταλτο, | ἡμὲν ἀνακλῖναι πυκινὸν λόχον ἢ δ' ἐπιθεῖναι· (525) | ἔνθ' ἄλλοι Δαναῶν ἡγήτορες ἢ δὲ μέδοντες | δάκρυά τ' ὠμόργυντο, τρέμονθ' ὑπὸ γυῖα ἐκάστου·

32 Eustathius, *Comm. ad Hom. Od.*, 1:433, 1–4, Stallbaum.

What is more, when he turns to discussing the ensuing encounter with the soul of Ajax, Eustathius insists once more on the primacy of Odysseus' contribution to the capture of the city. He observes that if Ajax had refused to talk to Odysseus only because of the Judgement of the Arms, it was all the more plausible that the souls of the Trojans might want to avoid the man who, by destroying their city, had earned the title of *ptoliporthos*.

τὸν Αἴαντα δὲ πλάττει προσφωνούμενον μὲν, μὴ ἀπαμειβόμενον δὲ, διὰ τὸ πρὸς τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα μῖσος περὶ Τροίαν ἐπὶ τῆ τῶν ὄπλων κρίσει. εἰ δὲ ὁ Αἴας μισῶν οὐ προσφθέγγεται τι, πιθανῶς ἄρα ὁ ποιητῆς οὐ πλάττει ψυχὴν Τρωϊκῆν ἐπιφανεῖσαν τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ, ὃς ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς Τροίας ἀφανισμῷ ἔσχε πτολίπορθος λέγεσθαι.³³

In Homer's representation, despite having been addressed by Odysseus, Ajax does not answer because of the hatred he felt for him after the Judgement of the Arms which took place at Troy. If Ajax does not say anything in response because of his hatred for Odysseus, the poet plausibly avoids representing any Trojan souls appearing before the hero who earned the title of 'city-sacker' for having destroyed Troy.

As we have already shown, Tzetzes never grants Odysseus the prestigious epithet that he purposely attributes to other characters. Through the celebration of Epeius and Neoptolemus, the scholar had already belittled Odysseus' contribution both to the building of the Horse and to the final battle. What still had to be challenged, however, was the leading position that, according to the Homeric account, Odysseus held on the day of the Greek victory. To contest the dominant tradition and to further perfect his global reappraisal of Odysseus, Tzetzes resorts again to another minor character. This time, however, his choice appears rather surprising.

4 Bringing Odysseus down to Size: Troy's Last Day According to the *Carmina Iliaca*

In the third part of his *Carmina Iliaca*, devoted to the last phases of the war, Tzetzes recounts how the Trojans were tricked into bringing the Wooden Horse inside the walls of their city. The hero who executed this part of the

33 Eustathius, *Comm. ad Hom. Od.*, 1:428, 15–8, Stallbaum.

plan was the wily Sinon, a secondary character unknown to Homer³⁴ and that the sources present in contrasting ways. Sometimes described as a courageous patriot, who endured horrible tortures to protect his comrades,³⁵ he is also unflatteringly associated with Odysseus, the deceiver *par excellence*.³⁶ Tzetzes, who rejected any kind of lie and trickery, predictably followed the latter branch of the tradition. Indeed, in a short scholium to the *Carmina Iliaca*, the scholar informs us that Sinon was a relative of Odysseus and, more specifically, that he was his cousin.

<Σίνωνα>· ὁ Σίνων ἀνεψιὸς ἦν Ὀδυσσεύς ἦτοι ἐξάδελφος.³⁷

<Sinon>] Sinon was Odysseus' cousin, that is his cousin on his mother's side.

Being a relative of the worst liar of all and being himself quite a skilled one, Sinon could not hope to be counted amongst Tzetzes' favorites. Therefore, we will not be surprised to observe that the passage describing Sinon's dubious accomplishment is far from being flattering to the crafty hero.

τοὶ δ' ἄρ' ἐν εἰρεσίῃ περὶ ὄντες ψευδέα νόστον
 ἐς Τένεδον κατάγοντο, Σίνωνα δὲ Τροίῃ ἔασαν (680)
 γυμνόν, ἐνὶ μελέεσσιν ἐκούσια τραύματ' ἔχοντα·
 τῷ δ' ἄρα πᾶν ἐτέταλτο Ἀχαιῶν ἔργον ἀνῦσαι.
 ὄρθρω μὲν τὰ τελείετο ἔργα δόλοιο Ἀχαιῶν·
 (...)
 τοῖς δὲ Σίνων δολόμητις ἐπέδραμε τραύμασι βριθῶν.
 μιλίχιος δ' ὁ γέρων ἀναείρετο, τίς πόθεν εἶη.
 ὁ δὲ δολοφροσύνησιν ἀμείβετο ἀγκύλα πάντα· (690)
 'εἶμι μὲν ἐκ Δαναῶν, Δαναοὶ δὲ με ἔδρασαν οὔτως,

34 Sinon, however, featured in the Epic Cycle: see Martin L. West, ed. and trans., *Greek Epic Fragments* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2003), pp. 122–5, 132–5 (*Little Iliad* arg. 5 and frag. 14), and 144–5 (*Sack of Ilium* arg. 2). He might have played a role also in Stesichorus' *Sack of Troy*: see Davies and Finglass, *Stesichorus: The Poems*, pp. 138–9 (frag. 104) and 427–8.

35 See e.g. Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* 12.360–73 and 14.107–14, ed. and trans. Francis Vian, 3 vols. (Paris, 1963–69), 3.102–3 and 180.

36 Lycophron, *Alexandra* 344–5, ed. and trans. Lorenzo Mascialino (Barcelona, 1956), p. 17.

37 Tzetzes, schol. ad *Carmina Iliaca*, 3.680, p. 240, 21, Leone. Tzetzes might be drawing this detail from Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 344–5, the earliest passage attesting to this kinship link with Odysseus (see the previous note and cf. Hornblower, *Lycophron: Alexandra*, p. 194). Triphiodorus too seems to hint at this tradition: see Triphiodorus, *Ilii excidium* 220, ed. and trans. Bernard Gerlaud (Paris, 1982), p. 84.

ὕμπερον καλέοντες ἀρηγόνα, ὡς Παλαμήδη.
 τόνδ' ἄρα δούρεον ἵππον ἄγαλμ' ἀνέθεντο Ἀθήνην,
 φάντες ὅτι Τρώεσσιν ὀλέθριον ἦμαρ ἐσεῖται,
 εἴ κεν ἐάτε μιν οὐδὲ νεῶ ἀγάγητε Ἀθήνης' (695).³⁸

Rowing, they set out on a false return | and they landed at Tenedus, leaving Sinon in Troy, | naked, with his limbs carrying self-inflicted wounds: | he had been entrusted to accomplish the whole plan of the Greeks. | The deceitful scheme of the Achaeans was achieved at dawn. | (...) | The wily Sinon, burdened with wounds, approached them (sc. the Trojans). | The old man asked him with soothing words who he was and where he came from. | Sinon answered with subtlety, and all he said was crooked: | “I am one of the Danaans and it was the Danaans who did this to me, | calling me your ally, as they did with Palamedes. | They dedicated this wooden horse as a statue in honor of Athena, | saying that the day of destruction will come for the Trojans, | if you leave it here and do not take it to Athena’s shrine”.

Tzetzes emphasizes Sinon’s deceitful behavior without celebrating his courage. Even the hero’s self-inflicted wounds are mentioned rather dismissively.³⁹ Moreover, the *Carmina Iliaca* omits any reference to the terrible tortures that – according to some sources⁴⁰ – Sinon had to endure to gain the Trojans’ trust.

In such a context, the reader cannot but be surprised by Tzetzes’ comment at verse 682. Before describing how the deceitful plan was put into effect, the scholar emphasizes that Sinon saw to the realization of the stratagem. To quote Tzetzes’ very words: “τῷ δ’ ἄρα πᾶν ἐτέταλτο Ἀχαιῶν ἔργον ἀνῦσαι” (“he had been entrusted to accomplish the whole plan of the Greeks”).

The phrasing of this verse is even more significant than its content. As we have already remarked, in the famous episode of the Homeric *Nekyia* (*Od.* 11), Odysseus had proudly declared that on Troy’s last day everything was under his command: “ἐμοὶ δ’ ἐπὶ πάντ’ ἐτέταλτο”. Eustathius would reproduce this expression in his *Parekbolai* on the *Odyssey*. Since this is the only occurrence of

38 Tzetzes, *Carmina Iliaca*, 3.679-83; 688–95, Leone.

39 By contrast, Triphiodorus – Tzetzes’ principal source for this passage – emphasizes the courage shown by Sinon, who willingly disfigured his own body to grant success to the Greek stratagem (see Triphiodorus, *Ilii excidium*, 227–9 and 258–61).

40 See again Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica*, 12.360-73.

such an expression in the whole *Odyssey*, we can be quite sure that in the *Carmina Iliaca* Tzetzes is equally alluding to that specific Homeric verse. His goal, however, is radically different from that of Eustathius. By echoing one of the Homeric verses where Odysseus' primacy was most celebrated and by knowingly referring it to another – secondary – character, Tzetzes challenges the great poet and his 'interpreters'. However repugnant Sinon might have been, this dubious and obscure relative of Odysseus had been more important to the Greek cause than his undeservedly celebrated cousin, whose overrated role is finally cut down to size by Tzetzes' truthful account.

5 Conclusion

The texts here discussed show that a debate centering upon the meaning of a Homeric epithet could represent, for the major Byzantine scholars of the 12th century, an important starting point to convey their own position towards Homer and the exegetic tradition. What might have appeared as a mere scholarly controversy was in fact closely connected to many crucial themes, such as the age-old opposition between Achilles and Odysseus, which in turn was tied to the definition of moral and intellectual excellence. Who was the best of the Achaeans? Which were the virtues that allowed the Greeks to win the endless Trojan war? Which hero truly represented the Homeric ideal?

As we have seen, Eustathius, who both resumes and develops the scholiastic tradition, clearly sides with Odysseus, the hero that Homer, despite having a soft spot for Achilles, eventually represents as the authentic conqueror of Troy. Like the majority of his contemporaries, Eustathius sees in Odysseus the ideal philosopher, a *sophos* who does not idly indulge in his knowledge, but uses his cleverness to solve real situations, such as, say, an apparently unwinnable war.

Tzetzes, as usual, chooses an original and rather solitary position. He opts for neither Achilles nor Odysseus, even if he appears to slightly favour the first. After all, the treacherous son of Laertes was responsible for the death of the greatest hero of all times, Palamedes, whom Tzetzes considers as a model and alter ego. The unjustified primacy that Homer grants Odysseus is the principal cause of the scholar's criticism of the poet, another trait that distinguishes his approach from that of his contemporaries. When he deems it necessary to restore the truth, Tzetzes does not hesitate to correct even Homer's mistakes, going as far as to write a new version of the story, where the heroes unjustly dismissed by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* finally receive the glory they were denied.

The unconventional nature of his work and thought, along with his difficult character, might have been responsible for Tzetzes' isolation among his contemporaries.⁴¹ In contrast to Eustathius, he never managed to be integrated into the cultural elite.⁴² Despite his complaints, however, his works were never forgotten. The *Carmina Iliaca*, for one, was copied in a surprisingly large number of manuscripts⁴³ and would later arouse the interest of modern classicists. A few decades after the famous *editio princeps* of Eustathius' *Parekbolai*,⁴⁴ the first – partial – edition of the *Carmina Iliaca* also appeared, soon to be followed by many others.⁴⁵ The same could be said about all the Homeric works of the scholar. In the 14th century, his *Allegories of the Iliad* was one of the principal models for Hermoniakos' *Paraphrase of the Iliad*.⁴⁶ This work, composed between 1323 and 1335, testifies to the fascination that Tzetzes' original interpretation of Homer kept exerting on later generations. Indeed, his *Allegories* have recently been translated into English,⁴⁷ thus contributing to a rekindling of interest in the scholar's exegetical work. In these last few years, Tzetzes has been the centre of an increasing number of conferences and research projects,⁴⁸ aiming at reconsidering the value of his overall production.

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- 41 On Tzetzes' rather aggressive personality see Michael J. Jeffreys, "The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 141–95: 148–50. Cf. also Felix Budelmann, "Classical Commentary in Byzantium: John Tzetzes on Ancient Greek Literature" in *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory*, eds. Roy. K. Gibson and Christina Shuttleworth Kraus, *Mnemosyne Supplementum* 232 (Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2002), pp. 141–69: 164–7, and, most recently, Panagiotis Agapitos, "John Tzetzes and the blemish examiners: a Byzantine teacher on schedography, everyday language and writerly disposition," *Medioevo Greco* 15 (2017), 1–57.
- 42 For Tzetzes' unsuccessful attempts to integrate into the Constantinopolitan cultural elite, see Maria Jagoda Luzzatto, *Tzetzes lettore di Tucidide. Note autografe sul Codice Heidelberg Palatino Greco* 252 (Bari, 1999), pp. 7–8, 18–20, and 53–5.
- 43 Twenty-two manuscripts have been recorded so far, dating to a period spanning from the 13th to the 18th century.
- 44 See Filippomaria Pontani, "Il proemio al *Commento all'Odissea* di Eustazio di Tessalonica (con appunti sulla tradizione del testo)," *Bollettino dei Classici* s. 3, 21 (2000), 5–58: 42–4 and Irene A. Liverani, "L'*editio princeps* dei *Commentarii all' Odissea* di Eustazio di Tessalonica," *Medioevo Greco* 2 (2002), 81–100.
- 45 See the introduction to Leone's edition of Tzetzes' *Carmina Iliaca*, pp. xxxiii–xxxv.
- 46 See Ingela Nilsson, "From Homer to Hermoniakos: Some Considerations of Troy Matter in Byzantine Literature," *Troianalexandrina* 4 (2004), 8–34: 23–6.
- 47 See John Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Iliad*, trans. Adam J. Goldwyn and Dimitra Kokkini (Cambridge, MA, 2015). An English translation of the *Allegories of the Odyssey*, by the same authors, is forthcoming in the same series.
- 48 See e.g. the international conference – entirely devoted to John Tzetzes – held at Ca' Foscari University (Venice) in September 2018. Many scholars and researchers are currently investigating different aspects of Tzetzes' work. See e.g. the research project conducted

Despite the marginalization that Tzetzes might have suffered in life, his work would survive through the ages and influence countless scholars and literati to this very day – which is just as much as can be said of Eustathius' work.

by B. Van den Berg (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), who is studying Tzetzes' *Carmina Iliaca* (as well as other poetic works) in the context of contemporary Byzantine education. A research project on Tzetzes' *Theogonia* is being carried out by M. Tomadaki at the University of Ghent. For recent publications on various aspects of Tzetzes' work and thought, see e.g. A. Pizzone's recent studies on the *Chiliads*: Aglae Pizzone, "Tzetzes' *Historia*: a Byzantine 'Book of Memory'?", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, 2 (2017), 182–207 and "The autobiographical subject in Tzetzes' *Chiliades*: an analysis of its components" in *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological approaches to Byzantine texts and images*, eds. Charis Messis, Margaret Mullett, and Ingela Nilsson, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* (Uppsala, 2018), pp. 287–304.

Greek Explicating Greek: A Study of Metaphrase Language and Style

Nikolas Churik

The¹ high style of Byzantine literature modelled itself on classical works in grammatical constructions and vocabulary.² Because these words and forms had long fallen out of daily use (indeed if they had ever been in *common* use), comprehension of certain major historical texts written in this classicizing language was hindered. To mitigate this difficulty, during the Palaiologan period, major historiographical works – the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, *Basilikos Andrias* of Nikephoros Blemmydes, and the *Historia* of the Niketas Choniates – were translated into a lower register to simplify the vocabulary and syntax of the texts. Although an apparently mass project of translation occurred in the 14th century,³ the production of translated texts was not a new phenomenon: already by the 5th century, Eutecnius the Sophist had undertaken an analogous project in producing metaphrases of the didactic poems of Oppian.⁴ Throughout the Byzantine period, the trend continued with, to name a few, several paraphrases/metaphrases of the *Iliad*,⁵ one of the *Batrachomyomachia*,⁶ and at least a partial translation of the *Odyssey*,⁷ in addition to the well-known

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- 1 Many deserve thanks for their help in the production of this paper, but especially Prof. Ineke Sluiter and the Classics department at Leiden University for all of their assistance during my time there; the other participants of the Trends and Turning Points conference for helpful comments; the anonymous reviewers who saved me from many errors; the editor at Brill; Prof. Neel Smith; the Fulbright Foundation for providing me with funding; and Mr. Chase Padusniak (Princeton) who read several drafts of this paper.
 - 2 Ihor Ševčenko, “Levels of Style in Byzantine Literature,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31/1 (1981), 290.
 - 3 John Davis, “Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates ‘Translated’: The Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Metaphrases,” in Ruth Macrides, ed, *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Ashgate, 2010), p. 67.
 - 4 Arnaud Zucker, “Qu’est-ce qu’une paraphrase? L’enfance grecque de la paraphrase,” *Rursus* 6 (2011), 11.
 - 5 Arthur Ludwich, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik. Aristarchs homerische Textkritik nach den Fragmenten des Didymos* (Leipzig, 1885), p. 486.
 - 6 Arthur Ludwich, *Die Homerische Batrachomachia des Karers Pigres* (Leipzig, 1896), p. 123.
 - 7 Robert Browning, “A Fourteenth-Century Prose Version of the “Odyssey,”” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992), 28.

Menologion.⁸ Despite the extent of time over which these processes took place, there was a seemingly surprising level of continuity, first in the language and then in the syntax of this ‘metaphrastic’ level of Greek. Rather than a creation in an *ad hoc* manner, this level of prose followed something of a standard vocabulary and certain grammatical features that mark it within this class. Although its boundaries are porous,⁹ there can be a certain demarcation over and against the levels of classicizing and vulgar speech. Palaiologan metaphrases of classicizing histories have been relatively well studied, and clear connections among them have been demonstrated, but the language, both in style and vocabulary, shares common features with earlier glossographic language, which indicates the origins of this metaphrastic level in the realm of education and reference. Such connections, explored in this paper, suggest that literary metaphrasis was interpretative trend that appeared throughout Byzantine literature. Because examples appear across periods and genres, textual translations may be viewed not as abrupt or sudden projects, but rather as products of an ongoing process of reception and explication.

This paper addresses the development of this metaphrastic style, the content of that register, and the hallmarks of continuity within that *niveau*. First an exposition of the major terms used in the paper is given, because of the varied use of nomenclature throughout the primary and secondary literature. Subsequently a brief history of the development and use of textual transposition is given to situate its developments prior to the 14th century. Then, the paper proceeds with a discussion of major stylistic points found in the Byzantine historiographical metaphrases and their predecessors. This exposition explores the key features found in the metaphrastic level and its hallmarks in contrast to the elite and vulgar style. The demarcations present normative cases, which do of course prove to be more fluid in practice. Next, there is a comparison among several texts of key syntactic features (especially verbal tense and mood and particle use). The syntactic examination allows the texts to be situated properly within the level of ‘*Schrift-Koine*’. Finally, the conclusions, which connect the Byzantine metaphrases to the glossographic language of sub-literary and educational texts, are given.

This paper takes examples mainly from texts referred to as paraphrases and metaphrases. While there are many sorts of texts written in the same register of language, it is possible to illustrate the point of this paper sufficiently with

8 Christian Høgel “Hagiography under the Macedonians,” *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Leiden, 2003), p. 217. See also idem, *Metaphrasis: Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography* (Oslo, 1996).

9 Herbert Hunger and Ihor Ševčenko, *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριᾶς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaiotes* (Vienna, 1986), p. 30, ‘ein mittleres Sprachniveau vor, dessen Grenzen nach “oben” und “unten” flexibel sind.

examples taken mainly from these two forms of literature. The concern here is the language and style employed, irrespective of content, so this paper considers how the text is rendered and not necessarily which or what part of the text is translated. Within the same language form, both focus on creating, as Pignani terms it, a ‘form for instrumental use’,¹⁰ which seeks to establish a text on a level appropriate for use in a given context. In any case, this comparison illustrates the continuity and suggests some bounds of the so-called ‘*Schrift-Koine*’. If, as it has been asserted, there was a standard ‘lexicon’ (notional, not literal) employed by the writer, then the contents of the main body of that language may be discerned. By looking at trends in words from works of various genres and spanning over several hundred years, we are able to see what an ‘average’ Byzantine vocabulary comprised and how it was employed, allowing for some differences of topic. Here, we consider the paraphrastic texts of the *Iliad* and *Batrachomyomachia* and the metaphrastic texts of the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene and of the *Basilikos Andrias* of Nikephoros Blemmydes, with several other lexicographical works used to highlight certain points.¹¹

1 Questions of Nomenclature

The transpositions of language from one register to another have been named in a variety of ways in the original context, by the secondary scholarship, and of course in contemporary parlance, so a brief survey of the terms historically used establishes the use in this paper. References in scholia are few and generally ambiguous, but they seem to use both terms ‘μεταφράζω’ and ‘παραφράζω’ to refer to literal renderings of the text – that is, more or less, word-for-word transpositions. A classic illustration of this point may be found in the scholion for ‘τέττα’, an interjection for an older comrade, which the scholiasts and grammarians call ‘ἀμετάφραστος’, because it cannot be rendered by another single word, but rather must have its function explained.¹² The scarcity of evidence makes a final conclusion based on the scholiastic corpus difficult.

10 Adriana Pignani, “La Parafraasi come Forma d’Uso Strumentale,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32.3 (1982), 21.

11 Immanuel Bekker, *Scholia in Homeri Iliadem* volume II, (Berlin, 1825), pp. 651–811; Ludwig, *Batrachomyomachia*, pp. 309–18; Herbert Hunger, *Anonyme Metaphrase zu Anna Komnene, Alexias XI–XIII* (Vienna, 1981); Herbert Hunger and Ihor Ševčenko, *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaïotes* (Vienna, 1986).

12 Ineke Sluiter, *Ancient Grammar in Context*, (Amsterdam, 1990) p. 187. Hartmut Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* vol. I (Berlin, 1969), (4.412a.) {2Ariston.}2 τέττα: ὅτι προσφώνησις ἐστὶ φιλεταιρικὴ ἀμετάφραστος καὶ ἀμετάληπτος. A.

Authors, ancient and modern, disagree on whether ‘metaphrase’ and ‘paraphrase’ are synonymous or are two different types of re-writing. Theon, for one, uses the terms interchangeably:

πάντες οἱ παλαιοὶ φαίνονται τῇ παραφράσει ἄριστα κεχρημένοι, οὐ μόνον τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων μεταπλάσσοντες. Ὁμηρον μεταφράζων, ὅτε φησί [ὁ Ἀρχίλοχος]...

All the ancients seem to have employed the paraphrase perfectly, not only reformulating not only their own words, but also those of others. Archilochus, metaphrasing Homer, when he says...

THEON, *Progymnasmata* 62.22¹³

The longer redaction of Tryphon’s *Περὶ τρόπων*, on the other hand, does differentiate between the senses: metaphrasis is an alteration in terms of quantity of words, whereas paraphrasis is alteration in diction while maintaining the same number of words.¹⁴ Among modern authors, Juan Signes Codoñer determines that generally ‘metaphrasis’ refers to a text that has been rendered into common Greek without regard for exact reproduction,¹⁵ and ‘paraphrasis’ to a text that has been rendered by means of other words, respecting the original structure, i.e. more or less word-for-word.¹⁶ Lehrs suggests that the names ‘metaphrasis’ and ‘paraphrasis’ occur regularly to title the same sorts of works.¹⁷

In this regard, the manuscript tradition provides little help because, in the first place, many titles are lacking because of damage; when titles are given, they have frequently been added by later editors. A clear example of this problem comes from the Pseudo-Psellos paraphrase of the *Iliad* for which, when

13 Zucker, *L'enfance* 8, ‘Dans la partie des Progymnasmata de Théon conservée en arménien, le chapitre consacré à la paraphrase pose d'emblée l'équivalence entre les deux termes: «La paraphrase consiste à changer la formulation tout en gardant les mêmes pensées; on l'appelle aussi métaphrase». For this text, see Michel Patillon, *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata* (Paris, 1997).

14 Daria D. Resh, “Towards a Byzantine Definition of Metaphrasis,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 55 (2015), 778–9.

15 Juan Signes Codoñer, “Towards a Vocabulary For Rewriting in Byzantium,” in *Textual Transmission in Byzantium: Between Textual Criticism and Quellenforschung*, ed. Juan Signes Codoñer and Immaculada Pérez Martín (Turnhout, 2014), p. 79.

16 Signes Codoñer, “Rewriting,” p. 82.

17 Karl Lehrs, *Die Pindarscholien. Eine kritische Untersuchung zur philologischen Quellenkunde*, (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 49–51. On p. 51, Lehrs mentions the connection of a third term, *metabole*, with the first two. See also Resh, “Byzantine Definition,” p. 758, n. 13.

a title is provided, both ‘paraphrasis’ and ‘metaphrasis’ appear.¹⁸ Subsequent scholarship, too, has been inconsistent. Schmidt, in his study of the *Iliad* transpositions, calls Bekker’s text a ‘paraphrase’ and Villoison’s text a ‘metaphrase’, following the use of the original publications. Since at least Quintilian (“neque ego paraphrasin esse interpretationem tantum volo, sed circa eosdem sensus certamen atque aemulationem”, *Inst.* 10.5.5), some scholars have used ‘paraphrase’ as the general category with literal and rhetorical subsets. Others have used the two terms separately. The difference between the literal ‘interpretation’ and rhetorical transformation may be characterized by the observation that one stood ‘as an aid to the comprehension of the poet paraphrased; the other is an end in itself, a substantive literary production.’¹⁹ This paper refers to texts individually with the name with which they have been published (e.g. Bekker’s paraphrase, Hunger’s metaphrase), but speaks generally of the language as ‘metaphrastic’. Ultimately the distinction does not pose a great difficulty for the point of this paper because the final purpose (communicating information to a broader audience) and level of language remain the same between the two.

One division of style used in classifying Byzantine speech, which Hunger at some points transposed to texts, has its poles set at the elite *Hochsprache* and the vulgar *Volkssprache*, with a so-called *Umgangssprache* sitting in between. In his original publication of the metaphrase of the *Alexiad*, Hunger subtitled his text ‘ein Beitrag zur Erschliessung der Byzantinischen Umgangssprache’, which he compared to the grammarians’ use of *καθωμυλημένη*²⁰ and which Ševčenko translates as ‘usual language’,²¹ and he defines such language as that which falls between the high and common language, but always in terms of a written text (the metaphrase itself, *de Ceremoniis*, *de Administrando*, etc.).²² In his later edition of the *Basilikos Andrias*, however, he changes the term to ‘*Schrift-Koine*’, following the comment of Eideneier.²³ Subsequently, these

18 Ioannis Vassis, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der sogenannten Psellos-Paraphrase der Ilias*, (Bonn, 1991), pp. 28–30.

19 P.J. Parsons, “A Schoolbook from the Sayce Collection,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 6 (1970), 138.

20 Starting at least with Tryphon in *Peri Tropôn* 196.27. Cf. Polybius x 5 9.

21 Ihor Ševčenko, “Additional Remarks to the Report,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32 (1982), 223.

22 Hunger, *Metaphrase*, pp. 22–3.

23 Hunger, *Metaphrase*, p. 21; Hunger and Ševčenko, *Ἀνδριάς*, pp. 29–31. Hans Eideneier, “Review of *Anonyme Metaphrase zu Anna Komnene, Alexias xi–xiii* (Vienna, 1981),” *Südostforschungen* 41 (1982), 589. The idea of this written Koine was put forward earlier by J.L. Van Dieten, “Bemerkungen zur Sprache der sog. vulgärgriechischen Niketas Paraphrase,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* VI (1979), 77, ‘Die Niketasparaphrase gehört nicht zur vulgärgriechischen Literatur, sondern ist vielmehr eine auf niedrigerer Stufe stehende, in der byzantinischen Koine verfaßte “Übersetzung” eines in der Reinsprache der “oberen

terms have become the standard parlance. Hunger explains his preference for Eideneier's term:

Immer ist dabei an der gesprochene Wort (*langage, parler*) und die lebendige Kommunikation gedacht. Ungerade das können wir für die Sprache der byzantinischen Metaphrasen nicht in Anspruch nehmen. Diese Texte sind vielmehr der Versuch, wichtige Werke der Hochsprache einen breiteren Leser – bzw. Hörerkreis zugänglich zu machen.²⁴

The stylistic level, then, does not concern itself with the *'Umgang'*, with the everyday dealings, but with the facilitation of a wider dissemination of an important text, which would otherwise be inaccessible. The question of language here revolves around the written – not spoken – word, so different expectations and categories are already in play; moreover, the written use of this level does not necessarily give a clear indication of how everyday interactions proceeded for those using it. The distinction between written and spoken proves to be important to further consideration of the development of this stylistic level from written exercises.

The language of the metaphor/paraphrase performs as Eideneier's classification of *'Schrift-Koine'* suggests: it acts as a written lowest common denominator in order to facilitate communication and dissemination across a wider field. As such, it is employed for many genres and fields, including internal court texts, hagiography, metaphrases of various kinds (philosophy, poetry, history, etc.). Again, because of the volume and variety of texts available for comparison, this paper focuses primarily on various metaphrases with only passing reference to other genres, even though they, too, reflect this common language. The point of this paper is to suggest that the roots and connections of this language may be perceived in a common educational and lexicographical vocabulary, so that at least a moderately educated audience might have been reached.

2 History of the Genre

A brief excursus into the history of the genre situates the Palaiologan texts amidst a tradition of transposing texts for further use. Two main groups, school texts and more literary texts, offer important parallels for these metaphrases,

Zehntausend", d.h. der sehr kleinen, wirklich literarisch gebildeten Elite von Byzanz geschriebenen Textes'.

24 Hunger and Ševčenko, *Ἀνδριὰς*, p. 30.

and both establish the historical possibilities necessary for the creation of the historiographical metaphrases.

School exercises on tablets and paper provide early evidence for both literal and figurative forms of transposition and are attested at least as early as the 2nd century B.C.²⁵ The literal texts generally offer only few lines and have the original text, the (frequently interlinear) translation, and sometimes a list of independent glosses. The rhetorical versions, too, have early evidence. In this case, Giangrande suggests, ‘the school boy was expected to write to a narrative “only a few lines long”, summarizing in his own words a story which the teacher had told him.’²⁶ In both cases, these exercises would have been familiar to the translators of the historiographical texts: for anyone competent enough to produce a translation, this form of instruction may be assumed.²⁷ With this style already familiar, it may then be possible to believe that the translators would have employed a familiar form of language from these exercises. This possibility becomes all the more likely when one realizes that those most established in the higher echelons of society would have had access to at least this basic form of education.²⁸

At least by the 4th century, major productions existed for metaphrases for literary texts. Themistius produced translations of at least five works of Aristotle and Eutecnius translated at least three of the works of Oppian.²⁹ The works of Themistius were still known to Psellos,³⁰ and the metaphrases of Eutecnius remain preserved in an impressive number of manuscripts.³¹ Following these evidently mass projects, transpositions of other major works, some already mentioned earlier, continued throughout the Byzantine period. Several versions of a related *Iliad* paraphrase occur, as is also the case for the *Batrachomyomachia* and *Odyssey*. Thus, when Davis claims, ‘the fact of the matter is that with the appearance of the Palaiologan historical metaphrases, we are faced for the first time with a sustained effort to translate substantial and highly prestigious prose texts “down” a few notches on the stylistic scale’³² he is correct within

25 See Marcel Hombert & Claire Préaux, “Une Tablette homérique de la Bibliothèque Bodléenne,” *IANKAPIIEIA: Mélanges Henri Grégoire* (Brussels, 1951), pp. 161–8. Parsons, “Schoolbook,” pp. 138–41.

26 Giuseppe Giangrande, “On the Origins of Greek Romance,” *Eranos* LX (1962), 153.

27 Robert Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians* (Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs, 70) (Berlin, 1993), p. 22.

28 Nikolaos Kalogeras, *Byzantine Childhood Education and its Social Role from the Sixth Century until the End of Iconoclasm* (Chicago, 2000), p. 16.

29 Zucker, “Paraphrasis,” p. 11.

30 Psellos, *Theologica*, 50.40.

31 Manolis Papathomopoulos, *Oppianus Apameensis Cynegetica, Eutecnius Sophistes Paraphrasis metro soluta* (Leipzig, 2003), pp. VII–XVIII.

32 Davis, “Kommene and Choniates,” p. 67.

the parameters he sets, but the statement fails to account for the context of their creation. The historiographical metaphrases were not *ex nihilo* constructions, but rather additions to an already established and productive tradition. Davis states correctly that the size and magnitude of the project are in many ways unparalleled, but this should not overshadow the fact that several notable predecessors existed and were evidently widespread.

From these two points, one may safely assume that the creators of the Palaiologan metaphrases were familiar with these sorts of texts and may have used similar language in the creation of their own. In the following sections, instances of parallels and echoes support this thesis.

3 Level of the Metaphrase

In his landmark article on the ‘Levels of Byzantine Style’, Ševčenko noted that a Byzantinist develops a sort of *Sprachgefühl* for determining the level of style of a text.³³ Fortunately, others have discerned certain hallmark features in the language of metaphrases in both style and vocabulary. These prove to be important in connecting these translations together as a genre. Before considering the features themselves, it may be worthwhile to consider Hunger’s statement on their purpose: ‘Umgangssprachliche Texte hingegen weisen bewußte Veränderungen der Hochsprache, Abstriche im Sinne der besseren Verständlichkeit auf, die allgemein auf größeren Einfachkeit abzielen.’³⁴ Rather than aiming for pure simplicity, the text tries for comprehensibility by means of simplification; with this goal in mind, it may be possible to consider the stylistics of the texts more clearly.

4 Style

Certain stylistic and syntactic features recur in the Palaiologan paraphrases that link them to each other and illustrate historical connections. To distinguish the level of style, we will first consider certain notable syntactic usages that characterize these mid-level, ‘*Schrift-Koine*’ texts. Horrocks summarizes the key characteristics of the metaphrastic level: avoidance of perfect,³⁵

33 Ševčenko, “Levels of Style,” p. 291.

34 Hunger, *Metaphrase*, p. 22, cf. Davis, “Komnene and Choniates,” p. 64.

35 Martin Hinterberger, “Synthetic Perfect in Byzantine Literature,” in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature* (Turnhout, 2014), p. 184, ‘Classicizing high level texts, in general, apply considerably more perfect forms than unpretentious low level forms’.

participles generally restricted to nominative and absolutes, replacements of some infinitives with verbs of purpose, avoidance of *recherché* vocabulary, middle verbs becoming active, classical morphology, use of ‘ὡς ἄν’ as final clause, and ‘αὐτός’ as emphatic (not yet demonstrative).³⁶ Perhaps the most immediately obvious among these is the general avoidance of the perfect tense, which is used frequently in the high style, and its replacement, generally, by the aorist, but not infrequently by the present. In the *Iliad* paraphrase, we see, for example, at 24.20, that ‘τεθνηότα’ becomes ‘ἀποθανόντα’. Similarly, in the *Alexiad* metaphrase at 22, the original has ‘τετελευτηκότος’, which becomes ‘ἀποθανόντος’.³⁷ A second characteristic is the loss of the optative and its replacement with various tenses,³⁸ depending on original use, but most frequently with the form of the subjunctive in the same tense or with the future indicative, as at *Batrachomyomachia* 15, where ‘γνοίην’ has become ‘κατανοήσω’. In distinction with texts of a lower linguistic level, those in ‘*Schrift-Koine*’ maintain the traditional ‘ἴνα’, as opposed to the more demotic ‘να’.³⁹ Hyperbaton is generally avoided, but in the more literally translated texts, it is sometimes preserved when it occurs in the original. One remarkable point of divergence is use of the genitive absolute. In the metaphrase to the *Alexiad*, these constructions are usually replaced by subordinate clauses, but in the *Iliadic* paraphrase, it is preserved (see 1.88 and 24.289). There is, then, some leeway in the grammar, just as we shall see in the vocabulary. Generally, these differences relate to the concerns of the texts: the one clarifies meaning, while the other aims to transmit content.⁴⁰

5 Vocabulary

The ‘*Schrift-Koine*’ retains a common vocabulary, while refraining from the *recherché* linguistic pyrotechnics of the *Hochsprache* and the supposed

36 Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London, 1994), p. 199.

37 Martin Hinterberger, “Synthetic Perfect in Byzantine Literature,” in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature*, ed. idem (Turnhout, 2014), p. 190, ‘Byzantine lexica often explain perfect forms rendering them as aorist forms or in the case of present perfect forms, as present’.

38 Eduard Schmidt, *De Iliadis Paraphrasis Bekkeriana et Metaphrasi Villoisoniana* (Königsberg, 1875), pp. 13–4.

39 A striking use of *να* occurs in the interlinear paraphrase in the Venetus A at 1.64: ὅστις να εἴποι ὅτι τοσοῦτον (ἄργισθη) ἐνδοξότατος ἀπόλλων.

40 For treatment of parallel tendencies in hagiographies, see Schiffer in Hugel, *Metaphrasis*.

barbarisms of the *Volkssprache*, and uses a simplified syntax that avoids high stylizations and low pitfalls.⁴¹ It is, as one says, ‘minimally Attic’.⁴² Two paradigmatic works composed originally in this level of speech are *De Administrando Imperio* and *De Cerimoniis*, and as a result, it has been observed that the *Umgangssprache* is something like the language level of Byzantine bureaucrats.⁴³

The texts tend to replace $-\mu$ verbs with counterparts from the $-\omega$ conjugation or simply to regularize the $-\mu$ verbs.⁴⁴ In the *Batrachomyomachia* 65, there is a change from ‘ἔδιδου’ to ‘παρείχετο’, and analogously in the metaphrase of the *Alexiad* 204, ‘δίδωμι’ is replaced by ‘παρέχω’. The same occurs at *Iliad* 1.18, where ‘δοίεν’ is rendered by ‘πράσχοιεν’.⁴⁵ The presence of the optative here is striking, but not terribly unusual.⁴⁶ Independent uses of the optative, that is, outside of conditional statements, are frequently (though inconsistently) retained. The same occurs with more familiar, but still irregular, ‘φημί’: throughout the texts, ‘φάτο’ and ‘ἔφη’ are replaced with forms of ‘λέγω’.

‘Λέγω’ becomes a stand-in for many verbs of speech, thus leading to a flattening out of vocabulary. This change stands to reason because rhetorical *uariatio* serves as a mark of the high style, while, for the metaphrase, relative simplicity of expression is preferred. As suggested, this was the form most concerned with clear transfer of information. In the metaphrase of Anna Komnene, Hunger lists 16 verbs, including ‘φημί’, in whose place ‘λέγω’ stands.⁴⁷ In the paraphrase of the *Iliad*, we see similarly 10 or so verbs replaced by the single one, including again ‘φημί’, ‘πρόσφημι’, ‘φωνέω’, and the compounds of ‘αὐδάω’. In the paraphrase of the *Batrachomyomachia*, six verbs, which for this

41 ‘The main conclusion is that the compilers were “genuine purists” who never – or almost never – used vernacular words or forms but who tried to make the difficult text of Blemmydes simpler and more comprehensible’ (Alexander Kazhdan, “Review of *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaiotes*,” *Speculum* 64.3 (1989), 719–21.)

42 Horrocks, *Greek*, p. 165, ‘minimally atticized but still clearly non-vernacular vocabulary, mainly classical morphology, simplified, somewhat archaizing syntax’.

43 Hunger, *Metaphrase*, p. 21, quoting *De Cerimoniis* VII.

44 Michael Hinterberger, “Between Simplification and Elaboration: Byzantine Metaphraseis Compared,” in *Textual Transmission in Byzantium: between Textual Criticism and Quellenforschung*, ed. Juan Signes Codoñer and Immaculada Pérez Martín (Turnhout, 2014), p. 41.

45 The pseudo-Psellos uses forms of *παρέχω* interchangeably with forms of *δίδωμι*. This is not terribly concerning because of 1) the earlier date of the text (again, it precedes the other two by at least two centuries) and 2) its origins in and relation to the Hellenistic D-scholia. It is striking, however, that in the paraphrase of Manuel Moschopoulos, forms of the verb *δίδωμι* are retained throughout the text.

46 Ἀτρεΐδαι τε καὶ ἄλλοι εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί, ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ δοίεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντες/ἐκπέρσαι Πριάμοιο πόλιν, εὖ δ’ οἴκαδ’ ἰκέσθαι (1.17-19).

47 Hunger, *Metaphrase*, p. 155.

poem make up the vast majority of verbs of speaking, including ‘ἀγορεύω’, ‘ἔρέω’, ‘φημί’, and ‘φθέγγομαι’, are replaced with the various forms of ‘λέγω’ (predominantly present, imperfect, and aorist). Parallels can also be seen in verbs of viewing and doing, and with the frequent recurrence of certain verbs, like ‘οἰκονομέω’, one may broadly observe that the general range of vocabulary was reduced.

6 Connection to Glossographic Language

At this point, we may say that the language of the Palaiologan metaphrases shares a common core with the language of earlier translations and lexicographical works. The consistency among the metaphrases has been posited already by Hunger and Davis,⁴⁸ so from these connections we are able to move further back to those earlier texts and confirm what Ševčenko posited decades ago, namely that the metaphrast worked within a system and did not translate on an *ad hoc* basis.⁴⁹ For the remainder of the paper, the basis of this system will be drawn out to signal metaphrastic language's continuity across time and genre since at least the 5th century.

As already suggested, there are strong similarities between the Palaiologan metaphrases and earlier transposed texts, so now an illustration of that overlap is brought forth. About 25 per cent of the ‘ausgetauschten Wörter’ from Blemmydes’ *Basilikos Andrias* compiled by Hunger have equivalent glosses in one or more of three major lexicographical works (*Lexicon* of Hesychius, *Suda*, and *Lexicon* of Pseudo-Zonaras),⁵⁰ and a slightly higher number exists with the scholia D to the *Iliad*. The following table illustrates the overlap clearly. Although it does not provide every possible example, it highlights the depth of the similarity. The metaphrase was produced in the 14th century, while the lexicon of Hesychius dates from the 5th, the *Suda* from the 10th, and Pseudo Zonaras from the 13th, so the consistent overlap suggests that the use of this vocabulary in translation was part of a planned system. The fact that the lexicon of Hesychius has the greatest consonance with metaphrase points to the long-standing stability of this language.

48 Hunger and Ševčenko, *Ἀνδριάς*, p. 207 and Davis, “Komnene and Choniates,” p. 69.

49 Ševčenko, “Additional Remarks,” p. 227.

50 Editions used: *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon* (Copenhagen, 1953–66) ed. Kurt Latte; *Suda Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1928–35) ed. Ada Adler; *Iohannis Zonarae lexicon ex tribus codicibus manuscriptis* (Amsterdam, 1967) ed. J.A.H. Tittmann.

ἀδαής-ἀμαθής	Zon.
ἀδιάσπαστος-ἀδιαχώριστος	Hes.
ἄθροισμος-συλλογή	Hes., Suda, Zon.
ἄθυρμα-παίγνιον	Hes., Suda, Zon.
αἰτιάομαι-μέμφομαι	Hes., Zon.
ἀκέστωρ-θεραπευτής	Hes., Zon.
ἀκμή-καιρός	Hes., Suda
ἀλγήδων-ὀδύνη	Hes.
ἄλλομαι-πηδάω	Suda, Zon.
ἀμβλύς-ἀσθενής	Zon.
ἄμυνα-τιμωρία	Hes.
ἀμφίστομος-δίστομος	Hes.
ἀναιρέτης-φθορεύς	Hes.
ἀνάκτορον-μεγαλόπολις	Hes.
ἀναπάλλω-ἀναπηδάω	Suda
ἀναπίπτω-ἀμελέω	Suda, Phot., Zon.
ἀναφέρω-ἀναβιβάζω	Hes.
ἀνδραποδώδης-δοῦλος	Hes., Suda, Zon.
ἀνδρόμεος-ἀνθρώπινος	Hes., Phot., Suda
ἀνιαρόν-ἀσθένεια	Hes., Phot., Suda
ἀντιβόλησις-παράκλησις	Suda
ἀντιπράττω-ἐναντιόομαι	Hes., Zon.

One may continue to note the correspondences between the translations of the metaphrases and the glosses of the D scholia.⁵¹ It is not necessary to rehearse the correspondences, which are quite numerous, so a small number will suffice to illustrate the pervasiveness of the overlap.

συναγείρω - συναθροίζω Ἄνδριάς 181

ἀγείρω - ἀθροίζω B 438, B 440, Γ 47, Δ 28

ἄθυρμα - παίγνιον *Alexiad* 382

ἄθυρμα - παιγνιον O 363

ἀκμαῖος - νέος Ἄνδριάς 125

ἀκμαίαν - νέαν Γ 53

51 Helmut van Thiel, *Scholia D in Iliadem* (2000), available at <http://kups.ub.uni-koeln.de/1810/>. Accessed 2018 May 20.

ἀναιρέω - φονεύω Ἀνδριάς 146, *Alexiad* 27, 35, 226, 366, 385
 ἀναιρεθέντων - φονευθέντων Δ 417

With these correspondences in mind, one finds that the strong core of the vocabulary has been set already for seven centuries. Over that period time, of course, some development must occur and purely static preservation remains difficult. Even still, the level of preservation does suggest an active preference for and knowledge of these sources.

Following the analyses of Hunger,⁵² there seem to be two main ways in which verbs are treated: the first is pure substitution and the second is a sort of periphrasis. The substitution takes one verb and replaces it with another, while the periphrastic form uses a verb which illustrates a sort of ‘category’ of action (e.g. ποιέω, κρατέω, etc.) with some sort of object. With the first, there is a considerable overlap among the metaphrases and the glossographic works, but with the periphrastic verbs, there is practically no overlap among any of the texts. The difference illustrates a gap in the otherwise systematic work and suggests something of the working method. The periphrastic translations generally have the ‘categorical’ verb complemented with some substantive which is frequently part of the original verb (e.g., βροντάω – βροντᾶς ποιέω BA 98; καταδουλαγωγέω – δοῦλον ποιέω BA 66, etc.). Because of the level of simplification apparent in these translations, these may have come from any source and even the metaphrasts’ own invention, making it difficult to establish a point of origin. Nevertheless, one may say that they do reflect the metaphrasts’ interest in *variatio* and the avoidance of excessive repetition. Before bracketing these and considering the others, it is worth mentioning that even this formula has some parallels, for example, ‘ἐχυρόω’ in Hesychius. This sort of ‘verbal analysis’ mirrors exactly the way compounds are broken apart in scholiastic treatments of compound words. These may be bracketed off because they likely represent the latest stratum of vocabulary, arising during production, rather than from a common source. In addition to the form of these translations, this is further suggested by the fact that the overlap between metaphrases of the *Alexiad* and *Basilikos Andrias* is exceptionally low in this category.⁵³

Although these parallels do not and cannot provide full explanation for the roots of the metaphrastic language, they point, at least, in the direction of its source. In an attempt to provide clarity and to facilitate comprehension, a sort of language was used that could be understood by anyone with a basic education. It stands to reason, then, that the core of this language parallels precisely the language used in educational instruction for Byzantine students. From

52 Hunger and Ševčenko, *Ἀνδριάς*, pp. 207–8.

53 Hunger and Ševčenko, *Ἀνδριάς*, p. 207.

these roots, the language developed functionally to satisfy the needs of a minimally educated audience. Its use in the historiographical metaphrases brings it back to its origins and is precisely the language one would expect to find in this sort of sub-literary text.

With a basic connection illustrated, now let us consider some less frequent words that are less likely just to have been part of the vocabulary. The verb 'ἀλγέω', to suffer, and its nominal form 'ἀλγηδών' are replaced in these three texts by 'ὀδυνάω' and 'ὀδύνη' respectively. The use at *Iliad* 8.85 is worth remarking upon. The epic text uses the form 'ἀλγήσας', which is replaced by 'ὀδυνηθείς'. Among classical authors, this aorist passive participle form of 'ὀδυνάομαι' is found only in Aristophanes' *Wasps* at line 285 and in Euripides' *Cyclops* at 661 (and in the second example it is a *compositum* with 'ἔξ-'). In fact, the only classical uses of the aorist passive occur in Aristophanes: twice in the *Acharnians*, lines 3 and 9 (the exempla cited in LSJ), and the *Frogs*, line 650. In Hellenistic, Patristic, and Byzantine writers, however, this form is found more frequently, but still in works like commentaries, lexica, and scholia.⁵⁴ Of additional note is the metaphrase of Oppian's *Halieutika* attributed to Eutecnius, where it occurs twice at 5.5.20 and 5.6.12, and in the lexicon of Hesychius, both from the 5th or 6th century. To offer another example, the present participle, 'ὀδυνωμένη', found in the paraphrase of *Batrachomyomachia*, is found, in various genders, only in post-classical works. With this example and others like it, the paraphrases at least bend, if not break, a cardinal rule of the high style by employing non-classical usage.⁵⁵ Here we may consider the caution offered by van der Valk in reference to similarities between certain types of lexical scholia: overlap does not necessitate relation or interdependence, but may only suggest that this was the common word at the time of composition.⁵⁶ This warning is well taken, but this particularly unusual overlap does seem suggestive, especially because of its appearance in other works with connections to the level of *Umgangssprache* across a wide range of time and a spread of genres.

None of this is, of course, to suggest a one-to-one correspondence or to paint a simplified picture. For example, both the *Batrachomyomachia* paraphrase and *Alexiad* metaphrase offer 'ὀνομάζω' to translate both 'καλέω' and its reduplicative form 'κυκλήσκω', while the *Iliad* paraphrase offers 'καλέω' for 'κυκλήσκω' and keeps 'καλέω' as-is. While at first glance this may seem explicable simply by date, we see that the Moschopoulos paraphrase of the *Iliad*,

54 One notable exception is in Nikephoros Blemmydes' *Laudatio Sancti Ioanni Evangelistae* (7.3), καὶ κατὰ τὸν τοῦ κρανίου τόπον ἔκουσίως ὀδυνηθεὶς διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ ἀποθανών.

55 Of course, many forms were regularized, perhaps most famously τύπτω.

56 Marchinus van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad* (Leiden, 1963), p. 289.

contemporary with the first two, offers ‘καλέω’ as well, while the previously mentioned paraphrase of the *Halieutika*, which predates Psellos by at least four centuries, offers ‘ὀνομάζω’ for ‘καλέω’. Thus, we can see that several words may be substituted for another and indeed may be exchanged for each other. For example, at *Batrachomyomachia* 14, the poem reads ‘ἀλήθευσον’, which is rendered by ‘ἀληθῶς εἶπε’. The original *Alexiad* 314 reads ‘ἀληθῆ λέγειν’ and is replaced by ‘ἀληθεύειν’. As a result, we observe a difficult complication: some phrases may be changed for the sake of change, rather than for an improvement in intelligibility. In developing a vocabulary of *Umgangssprache*, the cross between and within works for words and phrases which are at the same time exchanged and still interchangeable helps to establish the bounds of intelligibility. That is to say, as these previous examples illustrate, words that are intelligible and within the appropriate level of use may be translated for no other discernible reason than fulfilling the task at hand.

There are numerous occasions where the original word is replaced, even though the original itself was perfectly intelligible within this register. John of Sardis’ commentary on the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius may help to illuminate why this occurs (64.23-65.5):⁵⁷

παράφρασις δέ ἐστιν ἐρμηνείας ἀλλοίωσις τὴν αὐτὴν διάνοιαν φυλάττουσα· τὸ αὐτὸ δὲ καὶ μετάφρασις προσαγορεύεται· δεῖ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὕτω ταύτην προφέρειν, οὔτε τοῦ λεχθέντος ἢ πραχ-θέντος ἀφισταμένουσ οὔτε ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ἀκριβῶσ τῶν λέξεων μένοντασ.

Paraphrasis is the alteration of expression, while maintaining the same notion; the same thing is also referred to as metaphrasis, for it is necessary that we produce this in a way that we do not move away from the matter said or done, nor do we remain contented with exactly the same words.

If comparison may be drawn with hagiographies, aiming at a similar goal of linguistic transposition, then Høgel’s remark may be worth considering: ‘Much was rephrased and the use of the words of the original was often negligible, and this makes the metaphrastic redacted versions clearly distinct from their originals.’⁵⁸ A distinct text and no less a literary production resulted from the program of change: the thorough (if not always complete) transposition stamped

57 Resh, “Byzantine Definition,” p. 757.

58 Christian Høgel, *Metaphrasis: Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography* (Oslo, 1996), p. 10. Høgel goes on to remark, ‘The almost fastidious punctuality can sometimes even be quite impressive when you see the exact meaning reproduced with no reuse of words’ (17).

the production as a new work.⁵⁹ For this reason, perhaps, one may posit that as a part of the process of linguistic transformation, the vocabulary was changed. Although the transformation does not get carried out perfectly or consistently, it may be that this was a guide to follow, even if it was not always achieved. It is a rhetorical as much as a practical process so that ‘total transformation’ plays a role in the rhetorical aspect of the exercise.

From these examples, and certainly numerous others, a common vocabulary is evident, but also latent. In several cases, among these three texts, two agree with each other, while the third differs. Two examples will illustrate this well. In the *Batrachomyomachia* paraphrase at 233, ‘κρατήσας’ has become ‘περιλαβών’, and in the metaphrase of the *Alexiad* at 397 and 419, ‘κρατέω’ has become ‘λαμβάνω’, while in the paraphrase of the *Iliad*, the same word is rendered both by ‘ἄρχω’ alone 1.79 and as itself in conjunction with ‘ἄρχω’ (‘κράτειν καὶ ἄρχειν’) 1.288. Conversely, the translations of the *Alexiad* and *Iliad* offer ‘κρατέω’ for forms of ‘αἰρέω’, (98; 1.501) while the *Batrachomyomachia* provides ‘καταλαμβάνω’ at 208. Even if different texts had been selected, analogous gaps would have appeared. We see that even fairly contemporary pieces do not concur with one another, nor necessarily do ones rooted in the same material and in the same genre. In order to find the vocabulary that constituted the ‘*Schrift-Koine*’, it is necessary to take into consideration various lines of texts from a broader stretch of time and consider patterns of interactions. It is a question not only of pure vocabulary, but also of employment. In this case, we may observe a pitfall of necessarily assuming the classical use as the normative rule.

7 Conclusion⁶⁰

It is still evident that Ševčenko’s proposition that ‘there was a system of equivalents used ... and that these equivalents were not freely invented *ad hoc* by each “metaphraser”⁶¹ has some truth to it. If this were not the case, one would see more flux in the vocabulary employed, in place of the relative, if not always complete, agreement across time and even genre. The continuity across

59 Zucker sums this point up well: on voit ainsi qu’en prolongeant une paraphrasis sur une oeuvre entière, on obtient un nouveau texte complet qui est une transposition de l’original – voire une traduction -, qui se substitute à lui et s’impose à lui et s’impose comme une texte achevé qui devient indépendant (“L’enfance”, 6).

60 Because of the timing of this paper, it was not possible to take into account the insightful remarks from the ICBS roundtable on metaphrasis, especially the project from the University of Cyprus, ‘The vocabulary of Byzantine classicizing and literary Koine texts’.

61 Ševčenko, “Additional Remarks,” pp. 226–7.

centuries and genres suggests the development of a kind of working language for educated individuals, aiming for comprehension rather than literary enjoyment. Even so, by maintaining a number of archaizing features and words, the metaphrasts had an apparent interest in preserving some linguistic purity. By investigating what was 'average' or 'usual' within this linguistic level, one can understand what would have been within the realm of functional knowledge and consequently one can trace where this functional standard originates.

Doing and Telling Administration and Diplomacy: Speech Acts in the 13th-Century Balkans

Milan Vukašinović

We¹ are now far from the 19th and the early 20th century, when historians were leaving narrative parts of official documents, charters, or letters out of modern editions.² However, medieval written production is still not approached in a balanced, autonomous, and appropriate manner. There is a trend among both historians and literary scholars studying Serbian medieval history to prefer reporting and reiterating to theorizing and stepping out of the confines of traditional methods. This trend relies on an implicit idea of a temporal *turning point*, located vaguely in the 19th century, between *historical* or *premodern* narratives cognate to works of fiction, and *modern historiographic* narratives more akin to factual documents of the past. This turning point is no less constructed than that of “the fall of Constantinople,” evoked in the *Introduction* to this volume. In an attempt to separate “what mattered” from “what did not,” historians implicitly construct the notion of historicity. While aspiring to *tell* the story of past events, what their narratives *do* is construct their object of study. One of the most harmful practices in that process is making the strict binary opposition between the “documentary” and the “narrative sources,” and the separation of the documentary and the narrative parts in both *types* of texts. The narrative ones are seen as less “historical,” not sufficiently referring to “reality,” and thus less “valuable.”

The bastard children of this division are the voluminous hagiographies of the Serbian rulers and archbishops. These works offer more *historical facts* than a *usual saint's life*, and have therefore been conceived of as worthwhile by modern historians.³ However, scholars regularly disregard large sections of

1 This paper presents the results of research on the international scientific project Christian Culture in the Balkans in the Middle Ages: Byzantine Empire, Serbs and Bulgarians from the 9th to the 15th century, No. 177015, financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

2 See, for example, Stojan Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici srpskih država srednjeg veka* (1912; repr. Belgrade, 2005), pp. 384–90; Stanoje Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog naroda u srednjem veku 1, Izvori i istoriografija, Knjiga 1, O izvorima*, (Belgrade, 1937), pp. 340–2.

3 “Our medieval biographies have as much a glorifying as a documentary character... Nemanja's biography composed by the king Stefan the First Crowned is more a war-time and

text from these hagiographies, because they are full of *literary* embellishments, jarring to standard historiographical practice.⁴ Most of the medievalists dealing with Serbian matters accept this approach so readily that they do not even mention them. Still, explicit attempts to justify this approach are to be found even in the recent scholarship.⁵ While trapped in modern metanarratives,

diplomatic chronicle and family history, or even an autobiography, than it is a conventional, usual hagiography of Christian saints. *The Life of Saint Sava* by monk Teodosije resembles rather a chivalric romance, with a ruler's son turned monk as its main character (in its first part), and a biography of an archbishop of a respectable independent church (in its second part), than it does a saint's life." Milan Kašanin, *Srpska književnost u srednjem veku*, (Belgrade, 1975), pp. 90–1. All the translations from Serbian of both sources and secondary literature are mine.

- 4 Even though the literary qualities of these works were acknowledged fairly early, only recently have we begun to search for the place and the meaning of numerous micro-genres and stylistic curiosities embedded in them. See Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska, "Principi konstruisanja i uloga mikro-žanrova u Domentijanovom životu Svetog Save," *Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukove dane* 33/2 (2004), pp. 19–30. Constructed out of epideictic compositions, different kinds of orations, prayers, dramatic dialogues, monologues, documents, and letters, they represent a fascinating literary mosaic.
- 5 Sima Ćirković tries to introduce a balance between the two *types* of sources, but keeps them firmly apart. "It has been known for a long time that the saints' lives of our rulers and church elders owe a lot to the hagiographic tradition... There is a danger that, due to the literary technique of medieval hagiographers, a gap might appear between the text and the real life of the hagiographic hero... I find a great methodological significance in the fact that Domentijan's narration could have been subjected to the confrontation with other sources [i.e. charters], completely independent from our hagiographies, and that it brilliantly withstood that confrontation." Sima Ćirković, "Problemi biografije svetoga Save," in *Sava Nemanjić – Sveti Sava. Istorija i predanje*, eds. Jovan Babić, Dimitrije Blagojević et al. (Belgrade, 1979), pp. 219–20. Đorđe Bubalo, *Pragmatic Literacy in Medieval Serbia* (Turnhout, 2014) is less moderate: "The study of medieval reality is inconceivable without documents. The development of medieval studies and the improvement of its research apparatus are founded for the most part on the analysis and evaluation of documents as a historical source. Moreover, general validity can be attributed to such an assessment without hesitation, because it was by the critical evaluation of charters that the methodology of historical studies constructed its basic techniques. Historians readily and, with full justification, emphasize the precedence of work with documentary materials, and among them, in particular, the almost unlimited range of questions that can be addressed to these sources." (p. ix) "While first class examples of documentary literacy, in terms of reliability and interest, can be found among some of them [i.e. literary sources], in others it is difficult to differentiate the historical core, if indeed there is one, from artistic imagination and rhetorical stereotype." (p. 33). When the *narrative* parts of either documents or literature are considered, they are nonetheless pushed into the *ideological* sphere, constructed as imaginary and puzzlingly connected to reality. Even then, see for example, Boško I. Bojović, "L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastiques du Moyen Age serbe" (Rome, 1995), pp. 5–6: "Les chartres émanant des souverains serbes renferment un nombre considérable d'idées politiques, essentiellement dans leurs préambules (*prooemion*), qui constituent souvent d'authentiques petits traités de théologie politique et

scholars fail to see those that medieval authors communicated with their original readers. They tell their own story about the factual and the fictitious, the serious and the fictional,⁶ forgetting that, as Lorraine Daston put it, “facts are the mercenary soldiers of argument,”⁷ and that even a bare list of years, as Hayden White has argued, do tell a story.⁸

In this article, I argue that the binary division between documentary and narrative sources and the documentary and narrative parts in either of these texts in the medieval period should at least be re-examined, and maybe even completely abandoned, as a category of interpretation. The scope of my reading encompasses letters embedded in *The Life of Saint Simeon* (c.1216) by Stefan the First Crowned (1196–1227)⁹ and in the *Life of Saint Sava* (1254) by the Athonite monk Domentijan,¹⁰ of which there are many, and less numerous

parfois aussi des précis autobiographiques royaux... L'idéologie de la diplomatie royale se définit néanmoins en premier lieu par rapport à une réalité politique. Celle de la littérature officielle fait partie dans une large mesure d'un concept théorique... Autrement dit, les source diplomatique reflètent davantage la réalité politique contemporaine, alors que l'hagio-biographie dynastique en donne une interprétation sublimée...”; or Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarska ideologija Nemanjića. Diplomatička studija* (Belgrade, 1997), p. 10: “The important difference between the charters and other sources consists exactly of their official, courtly character of the ideology presented in the charters; this is not a characteristic, or at least not fully, of other literary or rather theological compositions [...] In the end, the political thought in the charters is expressed in connection to a specific historical and legal situation that the charter refers to. Immediate links between charter and reality give a historical dimension valuable for the study of Nemanjide ideology in these documents.”

- 6 A striking example can be found in the article on the documentary and fictitious in the Domentijan's *Life of Sava*: Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska, “Dokumentarno i fiksijsko u Domentijanovom delu *Život Svetog Save*,” in *Sveti Sava u srpskoj istoriji i tradiciji*, ed. Sima Ćirković (Belgrade, 1998), pp. 141–58, in Serbian with an English summary. The author tries to establish the degree of documentary material in speeches and letters embedded into this piece of hagiography. The underlying premise is that Domentijan shared our conceptions of documentary and fictional and used parts of the original documents to gain credibility in the eyes of his audience. He also used fictional elements to make the text more beautiful. The collapse of modern discourse about literature into the medieval one, as well as the untheorized collapse of the entity of the narrator into the one of the author, point out the main flaws of this approach.
- 7 Lorraine Daston, “Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe,” *Critical Inquiry* 18/1 (1991), p. 93.
- 8 Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7/1 (1980), pp. 12–5.
- 9 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon* = Stefan Prvovenčani, *Sabrana dela*, eds. Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska and Tomislav Jovanović (Belgrade, 1999), pp. 14–106.
- 10 Domentijan, *Life of Sava* = Domentijan, *Žitije svetoga Save*, eds. Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska and Tomislav Jovanović (Belgrade, 2001). A digitalized earlier edition of this work can be accessed online: Domentijan, *Život svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save*, ed. Đuro Daničić

cases of preserved *historical* letters of political and religious actors in the first half of 13th-century Serbia. This comparative analysis also uses models from Serbian charters of the period, as well as the acts and letters of Demetrios Chomatenos, the archbishop of Ohrid, as external control points. The general cultural connections between Serbia and Epiros in this period, as well as attested direct contacts between the people of power in the two polities, make such an approach justified.

By introducing the concept of *speech acts*¹¹ in-between myself and the object of my study, I am putting the basic premise of the traditional historians to the test. According to their *common-sense* credo, the documentary sources (the *real* letters and charters in this case) interacted with society, *did things with words*, while the narrative ones (here the embedded letters and documents) could have hoped to describe that society with a degree of accuracy, at best. In my parallel reading of the sources, I am trying to compare the linguistic utterances, the products of speaking or writing (*locution*) and reconstruct the conventional powers that the speech acts from the texts had in a given social context (*illocution*), leaving aside the problematic question of desired consequences (*perlocution*).¹² As it will be shown, neither locutionary manifestation nor the structural distribution of illocutionary acts differ significantly in the

(Belgrade, 1865). Available at http://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Stara_i_retka_knjiga/Zbirka_knjiga_Djuro_Danicica/S-II-0226#page/o/mode/iup. Accessed 2016 April 25.

- 11 The speech-act theory was postulated by J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford, 1962). Austin left numerous contradictions, subsequently treated in different terms by analytic philosophers and literary critics. In this article, I am siding with the latter, since I acknowledge the importance of emphasizing the socially conventional nature of language. See Sandy Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* (New York, 1990), pp. 22–7. I am also not ready to dismiss the literary discourse as being parasitic on normal language, as in Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 21–2, 104. For the arguments in favor of the marriage between the speech-act theory and literary criticism see Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, pp. 42–56. For a comprehensive discussion on the applications and applicability of the speech-act theory in literature, see Peter J. Rabinowitz, “Speech act theory and literary studies,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume VIII: From Formalism to Poststructuralism* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 347–74. A well-argued but misdirected criticism of these usages can be found in David Gorman, “The Use and Abuse of Speech-Act Theory in Criticism,” *Poetics Today* 20/1 (1999), pp. 93–119. See also the response to it in Sandy Petrey, “Whose Acts? Which Communities? A Reply to David Gorman,” *Poetics Today* 21/2 (2000), 423–33.
- 12 For the detailed definition of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, see Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 98–107. In short, a *performative* utterance, a speech that does not describe the world, but *does* things, consists of the *locutionary act* – the words that are uttered, and the *illocutionary act* – the action they are meant or expected to perform in a specific social context.

documentary and narrative sources, while the narrative parts of both *types* of sources (*constatives*) seem to be a necessary element for the felicitous performance of illocutionary acts.¹³ Furthermore, I am treating the concept of the speech acts as a traveling one, and thus I expect for it to be modified, too, in the process of confrontation with the sources.¹⁴

Only a handful of extant letters in Old Serbian from the first half of the 13th century are considered to be *genuine* or *historical*. One is the epistle of the first Serbian archbishop Sava Nemanjić, allegedly sent from the Holy Land to Spiridon, *hegoumenos* of the Studenica monastery, most probably in 1234/5.¹⁵ There is also a letter sent by the Serbian king Stefan Vladislav in the late 1240s and two letters sent by Serbian noblemen of the Adriatic coast in the early 1250s. All three latter letters were sent to the Ragusan republic and conserved in its archives. A letter that came as a response to Stefan Vladislav is preserved, too.¹⁶

On the narrative side, there are nine embedded letters in each of the above-mentioned hagiographies. They differ in length and level of literary elaboration, and they have an important function in the narrative structure of the *Lives*.¹⁷ Since no textual model for the practice of embedding letters in hagiography can be found in either earlier translated literary works or contemporary Greek ones that the writers could get in touch with via Mount Athos, it is safe to presume that the prominence of letters in hagiographies reflected their importance as a means of communication in the life of the 13th-century court

13 For the difference between constatives, that can be judged true or false, and performatives, which can be felicitously or infelicitously performed, see Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 4–11, and then the elaboration and critique of these concepts in Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, pp. 4–21.

14 As defined and theorized in Mieke Bal, *Traveling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto, 2002), pp. 24, 40–6.

15 Gjura Daničić, “Poslanica sv. Save arhiepiskopa srpskoga iz Jerusalima u Studenicu igumanu Spiridonu,” *Starine* IV (1872), 230–1; Pavle Ivić, “O jeziku u spisima Svetog Save,” in *Međunarodni naučni skup Sava Nemanjić – Sveti Sava, istorija i predanje, Decembar 1976*, ed. Vojislav J. Đurić (Belgrade, 1979), pp. 167–9.

16 *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćirilskih povelja i pisama Srbije, Bosne i Dubrovnika, knjiga I, 1186–1321*, eds. Vladimir Mošin, Sima Ćirković and Dušan Sindik (Belgrade, 2011), pp. 149–52, 193–4, 217–8.

17 I call these embedded letters or the places where they are meant to be but are not included *epistolary nodes*. They bridge geographical distances in the story, changing the spatial frames when no characters are available. They also master or seize the space, ideologically speaking, by changing the spatial schemata of the reader on a diachronic scale. See Milan Vukašinović, “Letters and Space – Function and Models of Epistolary Nodes in Serbian Hagiography,” in *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological approaches to Byzantine texts and images*, eds. Charis Mesis, Margaret Mullett and Ingela Nilsson (Uppsala, 2018), pp. 53–70.

and monasteries. Because of the stylistic similarities of all the embedded letters, it is equally hard to suppose that they were transcripts of actual missives or that they were to have an ethopoeic function in the narrative, as the letters in Greek literature used to.¹⁸ So, when we are reading the embedded letters as part of a developed narrative, we have an insight into what letters should ideally look like and do.

If we examine the verbal content of the embedded letters closely, we can clearly distinguish between two separate parts in almost every one of them, as the following examples demonstrate.

My lord, lover of Christ, reverend father Sava, my worthlessness [Stefan the First Crowned] reminds you that when you left your progenitor [Stefan Nemanja] and us and went to follow Christ, then I, although being in sorrow, found comfort in useful things, gazing at our lord the progenitor, with love. Afterwards, this holy lord [Stefan Nemanja] also left me and my brother [Vukan]. He blessed us and set the law for us to live, keeping his commands without trespasses and conducting what he ordered throughout all the days of our lives, so his offspring could live in peace and quiet. But, due to my sins ... [Vukan] led out foreigners in an attack on his fatherland, took my lands, plundered them, disobeying our Lord's commands...¹⁹

Oh venerable [Sava], oh God-bearing one, oh you of the holy spirit, oh earthly angel, heavenly man, what is this wonder that happened among us? When your venerability left us, our holy lord Simeon turned his head away from us, and the gift of the Holy Spirit of simple mercy and the apparitions of the Holy one [Simeon] hid themselves, and the pouring of fragrant myrrh was stopped. Because of our sins, he closed his ever gentle womb of mercy.²⁰

The sender and the addressee in both examples are the same – the character of Stefan the First Crowned writes a letter to his brother Sava – but each example is drawn from different hagiographies, those of Simeon and Sava respectively.

18 Christian Høgel, "The Actual Words of Theodore Graptos: A Byzantine Saint's Letter as Inserted Document," in *Medieval Letters: Between Fiction and Document*, eds. Christian Høgel and Elisabeth Bartoli (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 307–15 is an interesting example, but an actual saint's letter is seen behind the embedded one. For the ethopoeic method, see for example Corine Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre: Domaine grec* (Paris, 2002), p. 19.

19 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, p. 72–4.

20 Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, p. 188.

In both, the sender relates a story of past events or the present state of affairs to the addressee. This seems to be the first of the two necessary parts of the embedded letters.²¹ They are sometimes preceded by a master illocutionary verb, in the letter itself or in its tag, such as the verb “remind” in the example above. They have the truth value, meaning that they could be judged true or false. They represent the worldview of the speaker, and the objects which these words describe (*the referents*) are supposed to exist independently from them, whether they are evoked or not.

Questions also appear, but they are voiced rhetorically, as in the question Stefan asks his brother in the same letter:

Is he [Stefan Nemanja/Simeon] here with us or not, or has he followed you again to the usual abodes on Mount Athos, or he does not listen when we pray because of our sins?²²

These questions do not ask for or get a response; in a way they carry it inside, being constative themselves. These parts of the letters have a twofold function. Firstly, they move the plot forward, forming the micro-narrative core of each letter. Secondly and more significantly, they elaborate the context of the communication, setting the rules under which the second part of the letters can have illocutionary force.

The other parts of these letters, present in all but one, are requests and/or commands.²³

That is why I beseech you constantly, oh reverend father Sava, *hear* the voice I [Stefan the First Crowned] am sending from the depths of my heart, and *don't despise* my pleas. *Take* the relics of the Holy and the Venerable one, *have* mercy on us, *make* an effort and *bring* the fine fragrant

21 These would fall under Austin's initial category of constative utterance. See above, n. 12. John Searle develops a new and sometimes useful taxonomy of speech acts on the basis of a strangely inflexible interpretation of Austin's work. He defines five groups of illocutionary speech acts: 1) Assertives (ill. verbs: conclude, deduce, describe), 2) Directives (ask, order, request), 3) Commissives (promise), 4) Expressives (thank, apologize, welcome), 5) Declaratives (declare). John Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 12–20. In his taxonomy, these parts of the letters have assertive illocutionary force. While I do refer to some of his terms, I strongly argue for a more elastic and comprehensive approach to language and literature.

22 Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, p. 188.

23 Clear *performatives* in Austin's terms, *directives* in Searle's taxonomy.

relics of the Holy one yourself, to enlighten his fatherland by the transfer of his relics and your coming.²⁴

This is the continuation of the first letter quoted above. What is important to stress here is that the contextualization provided by the narrative or constative part of the letter does not function solely as an introduction or clarification given by the author to the readers, so that they can understand the actions of the characters better. It is the context of Stefan's sinfulness and Vukan's fratricidal intentions that give the illocutionary force to Stefan's demands for Sava's redeeming coming. Without the narrative part, Stefan's utterances would fail to be felicitous speech acts, both in the story world,²⁵ that is on the level of narration, and in the communication between the author and the reader, even if they took the same locutionary form.

The narrative and the directive parts are never clearly separated, but the narration usually comes first and the commands or requests follow. In Domentijan's text, in the longest of Sava's epistles addressed to his father, there are 21 imperative mood verbs, 16 of which urge the addressee to come and join the sender.²⁶ "Come, my sir, you, close servant of my Lord, come, reverend!... Enter into the joy of your Lord, because those who love him will prosper."²⁷ While this is the most common request, it is not the only one. The addressees are pleaded to send money,²⁸ or ice,²⁹ or pray for senders.³⁰ A deceased saint is asked by a letter to start pouring myrrh again.³¹ These sentences have a *directive*

24 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, p. 74. The italicization of illocutionary verbs for requests and commands, here and further down, is mine. A part of the second quoted letter's commands and pleas go as follows: "Yes, *embody* your mercy among us, in accordance with the original custom, and *visit* us with your pluriphanous love; *come* to us, o! you who are the richest in Father's heavenly glory; *come* to us, o! you who are partaker of angels and equal to the venerable ones. *Come* to us, o! you who is adorned with God, so that our Lord and God would let his face shine upon us, by your coming and your prayers, and so that our venerable saintly lord [Simeon] would pour out his withdrawn beneficence [myrrh] again upon us, in his opulent mercy." Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, p. 190.

25 *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (New York, 2005), s.v. Storyworld. "... storyworlds are mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why and in what fashion in the world in which recipients relocate ... as they work to comprehend a narrative." David Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, NE, 2002), p. 5.

26 Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, pp. 42–64.

27 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, p. 52.

28 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, pp. 54–6.

29 Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, p. 254.

30 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, p. 52.

31 Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, p. 190.

illocutionary force, whether or not they are introduced by an illocutionary verb, like “beseech” in the quoted letter of Stefan. As any other performative, these utterances cannot be judged true or false, but only felicitous or infelicitous. They also do not refer to an outside world object but create a referent in the act of speaking. Even in the letters that are not *directive* as a whole, when no *directive* seems necessary, we usually find one.

I [Sava] received your [Stefan's] embassy with love and not despising your pleas, I am carrying the relics of your Saint [Simeon], the ones you desire. I am traveling myself with them, too, and with other monks from this holy place that this holy lord [Simeon] chose to live in. So, dear, *make preparations* to meet him!³²

That is how a literary letter was supposed to do things. How did the *real* letters do them? Sava's letter to Spiridon does not differ much from the *literary* ones. The narrative and the directive parts intertwine. Sava greets his fellow monk and then describes his journey to Jerusalem, where he lay sick. He *demand*s that Spiridon pray for him and also sends him a piece of the Holy Cross, a stone, and a napkin, *advising* him what to do with them (*directives*).

If you [plural] want to know about my sinful self [Sava], it happened that with God's mercy and your holy prayer we came to the Holy City in good health and joy. We paid homage to the holiest and divine tomb and the adjacent sacred places. First, we arranged for you to be mentioned with the saints, then we visited the sacred places. [...] With this little cross you should pray, carry it at all times around your neck, even if you have some other little icon, you should carry it at all times. And gird yourself with this little belt, to have it at all times around your waist, because I laid it [*sic*] on the grave, the little cross, and the little belt.³³

We should notice that even though Spiridon was most probably aware of Sava's intention to visit the Holy sepulchre and was familiar with it as a concept, Sava still needed to introduce it into his discourse prior to the directive advising about the relics, so that these latter speech acts would have illocutionary force and be felicitously performed.

However, there is also one speech act in this letter that is neither constative nor directive.

32 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, pp. 74–6.

33 Daničić, “Poslanica sv. Save arhiepiskopa,” p. 231.

Let the God's peace flow into your hearts, and I bless the one who blesses you and curse the ones who do you wrong, may they and their homelands never have the grace of God, nor my prayer. Let them die as mindless Arius.³⁴

The form of this sentence is that of a blessing and a curse, and it gets close to a legal one. These speech acts, as well as any others, get their active force out of social conventions. Even though these conventions might be taken as implied among the inhabitants of both the *story world* and the *real one*,³⁵ they are still evoked in the documents, embedded or not. For example, Sava's blessing and curses only make sense in the world where an interventionist God is a fact. Yet, this entity keeps being evoked over and over again, even in short documents.

Yes, if someone should be offended, you should not be offended, because the Lord will come and he will not be late, so you would hear the voice: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"³⁶

This phenomenon also appears in administrative acts, such as charters, *typika*, and legal codes. The narrative part of the letter corresponds to *prooimion* and the narration of charters, and the performative (directive and declarative) parts to promulgation and sanction.

In Serbian charters, the narrative part is particularly extensive (1), while the effective or declarative one can fit into one or two sentences (2), as in the famous charter of Simeon for Chilandar monastery.

- (1) In the beginning, God created heaven and earth and people on it, and he blessed them and gave them power over all of his creatures. And he installed some as emperors, others as princes, and some as rulers. And he gave to each of them their flock to pasture and protect it from all the evil that faced them ... Thus, by his numerous and immense grace and

34 Ibid.

35 Even if we accept the difference between the factual and the fictional documents, it is hard to disregard the difference between the levels of communication. On narrative levels of communication, see Gérard Genette, *Figures* 111 (Paris, 1972), pp. 238–41. For a short summary of subsequent theories and approaches to this question in narratological works, together with the respective bibliography, see Manfred Jahn, *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* (Cologne, 2005), N.2.4 (Available at <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ameoz/pppn.htm#N2.4>. Accessed 2016 September 21.)

36 Daničić, "Poslanica sv. Save arhiepiskopa," p. 231. (Matt. 25:21)

philanthropy, he gave our forefathers and our grandfathers this land, to rule over it... and he set me, by the name of Stefan Nemanja, given to me on the holy baptism, as a grand *župan*... And after this, it pleased my Lord, Jesus Christ, as the scripture reports: "No prophet is received in his fatherland"...

- (2) And if one of the monastery servants or Valachs should run away, let them be taken back; if any of the *župan's* people should run away, let them be taken back. And let nothing that I gave to the Holy Mountain be needed by my child, nor grandchild, nor relative, nor anybody else. If anybody should change this, let God judge him, and let the Mother of God and myself, sinful Simeon, be his opponents in the last judgment.³⁷

The narrative part is not a plain literary embellishment or a simple political or ideological manifesto, but a meaningful and functional segment that determines the regulative rules in which the declarative part can have its felicitous performative effect.

Now, most of the letters in the hagiographies are exchanged between the members of the royal family and have an administrative note to them. However, we also find one diplomatic letter in Stefan's *Life of Simeon*. When Michel I of Epiros took the city of Skadar, Stefan wrote to him in protest, threatening with an attack.³⁸ This letter resembles three Serbian letters sent to the Ragusan republic.

I, by the grace of God, Stefan Vladislav, am writing to you, duke of Dubrovnik and the whole municipality. I made a promise to protect your city and work in its honor. And you promised and said: let your villages and your people be at peace. So I told my people not to fear anything. ... And you attacked my villages and noblemen, and cut down others. Let God judge who kept the oath in this matter! And you do what you can! May God give you health! Stefan Vladislav.³⁹

The response to this letter came from the Ragusan municipality, with a relatively long narrative part, in which the duke and the high officials confirmed that they had sworn an oath and claim that nobody pillaged Vladislav's land under their protection. They end the letter with a short promise that nobody who is serving the Republic will plunder king's lands in the future.⁴⁰ The other

37 *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćirilskih povelja*, pp. 68–9.

38 Stefan the First Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, pp. 88–9.

39 *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćirilskih povelja*, p. 150.

40 *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćirilskih povelja*, pp. 152.

letters in this group are also short, with a significant narrative part, presenting the state of affairs and the wrongdoings of the addressee, followed by a short directive or commissive part (e.g. *leave the city, take your people to court, don't take it against us, stop selling my people*). The function of these speech acts and the relationship between the different parts is the same as described above.

In the Epirote state of the first half of the 13th century, the situation was somewhat more complicated, not only because of the heavy weight of tradition in administration and literature. One of the main sources for this subject comprises the writings of the archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos. We can be almost certain that the writings of Demetrios Chomatenos form a coherent, intended collection. The documents are clearly if not consistently grouped according to the subject matter and formal criteria.⁴¹

The fact that Chomatenos' work is shaped as a collection makes its metanarrative, the idea that binds all the pieces together, more visible. The metanarrative of the archbishop's documents might have been conceived by Chomatenos himself, but it is certainly emphasized by the later, unknown author of the collection. It tells the story of a state whose actions are well grounded in the narratives of imperial and religious history and aiming towards a future that is legitimate and non-innovative, but still responsive to political and societal changes.⁴² This metanarrative forms a backdrop context for the effectiveness

41 Demetrios Chomatenos, *Ponemata Diafora*, ed. Günter Prinzing (Berlin, 2002), pp. 284*-298*. Still, scholars are reluctant to treat all the parts of the collection as *letters*. Yes, most of his writings are juridical decisions or legal interpretations. Only eight out of 152 documents in the collection have the epistolary indicator *πρός* in their title, whether they are named *ἐπιστολή*, *ἐνταλμα*, *ἀντιγραφή*, or *ἀπολογία*. The titles of the rest of the documents are introduced by *περί*, *ὅτι* or a full phrase. Prinzing has recognized around 40 letters on the basis of their form, while the content of other documents indicates that they also could be treated as such. Demetrios Chomatenos, *Ponemata Diafora*, pp. 270*-1*, 276*-7*, 285*-91*. But all of the documents meet most of Trapp's six criteria for considering a piece of writing to be a letter. According to the set of "contextual and formal characteristics," if a document is a relatively short, overtly addressed message on a tangible medium exchanged in a communication between two physically distant parties, it can be regarded as a letter. Michael Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology, with Translation* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 1; Roy K. Gibson and Andrew D. Morrison, "Introduction: What is a Letter," in *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography*, eds. Ruth Morello and Andrew D. Morrison (Oxford, 2007), p. 3. For the important phenomenon of Byzantine letter collections, see primarily Margaret Mullett, *Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot, 1997); Stratis Papaioanou, "Fragile Literature: Byzantine Letter-Collections and the Case of Michael Psellos," in *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: Le texte en tant que message immédiat*, ed. Paolo Odorico (Paris, 2012) pp. 289–328; Alexander Riehle, "Epistolography as Autobiography: Remarks on the Letter-Collections of Nikephoros Choumnos," *Parekbolai* 2 (2012), pp. 1–22.

42 Overtly visible in e.g. Demetrios Chomatenos, *Ponemata Diafora*, pp. 363–7, but structurally present in one way or another in most of the documents.

of Chomatenos' speech acts. Of course, this kind of metanarrative is present both in the Serbian hagiographies and in the Ragusan document collections. It is woven through the narrative parts of these compositions and serves, through the repetition of formulas or through the disposition or structure of the narrative, as a foundation for the felicitous performance of the speech acts conveyed by the texts.

But how can we examine the illocutionary force transmitted by the *real*-world actions in the *real* letters of Demetrios Chomatenos? I will take two of his letters as examples: numbers 10 and 86 in Prinzing's edition, sent to Stefan the First Crowned and archbishop Sava respectively. In the first, Chomatenos answers Stefan's request and explains to him why the marriage between him and Komnene, the daughter of Michael I, should be forbidden, when previously a marriage between his son and another of Michael's daughters had been allowed. The structure is clear: 1) salutations (directives/performative speech acts),⁴³ 2) exposition of the question (constatives/narrative part),⁴⁴ 3) quotations from the Holy Fathers and Basilikai (declarations and some directives – "let it be known to your nobility"/performative speech acts),⁴⁵ 4) the final and longest part of narration about the previous time Stefan sent messengers and got the positive response for his son (constatives/narrative part).⁴⁶

The structure is almost identical in the second letter, although the distribution of the text is somewhat different between the parts: 1) salutation (expressives/performative speech acts),⁴⁷ 2) narration of Sava's previous life and deeds, his trespasses (constatives/narrative part),⁴⁸ 3) legal regulations (performative speech acts)⁴⁹ 4) presenting the messenger (constatives/narrative part).⁵⁰ These two letters are very indicative, not only in the sense that narrative passages are predominant in them. These narrative sentences join the metanarrative flow on order and legitimacy of the whole collection to form the context and determine the regulative rules for actions in administration and diplomacy. Simply put, in the letter to Sava, the canon law by which no church

43 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 10, p. 55, lines 2–7.

44 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 10, p. 55, lines 7–14.

45 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 10, p. 55, lines 15–32.

46 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 10, p. 56, lines 33–68.

47 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 86, p. 296, lines 2–7.

48 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 86, pp. 296–8, lines 7–77.

49 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 86, pp. 298–302, lines 78–203.

50 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 86, p. 302, lines 204–7.

official should meddle in another one's diocese was not expected to function without the narrative of Sava as a disobedient and vain monk.⁵¹

Tentative Conclusions

This paper has tried to draw attention to the functional and structural resemblance between the texts traditionally labelled as narrative and documentary, as well as to the interdependence of narrative and documentary parts of individual texts. The principles observed in a relatively limited textual material should undoubtedly be tested on a wider scale, in order to tackle both a methodological trend and a turning point of separation that is constitutive to modern historiographic discipline.

My argument is also bound to slightly reshape the theoretical tool I am using. In one of the favourite examples of the speech-act theorists, the words "I do (take you to be my lawfully wedded husband/wife)," as well as those "I now pronounce you husband and wife (or any other variation)," represent respectively a commissive and a declarative speech act that conventionally performs the constitution of marriage in most Western societies.⁵² When participating in the mentioned ceremony, we have probably already internalized the conventions which make this act a felicitous one in our community. However, a marriage ceremony is seldom limited to these two speech acts. The narrative part which precedes it may vary in content, but it must be there, at least to evoke the authority and the legal code under which the marriage is performed. Even though the people participating in the ceremony have heard these words before, they are necessary in order to re-establish the existing convention. And if we can disregard them in a contemporary speech situation, we do not have that privilege when dealing with medieval textual production. On the one hand, dismissing the narrative part of documents, or even separating them from the active parts on a binary scale, can only lead to the influx of anachronistic contextual elements into the interpretation of a historical text. On the other hand, looking closely at the narrative parts of documents, whether medieval or modern, might show us that power is almost never simply performed, that it has

51 Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diafora*, 86, pp. 299–300, lines 108–29; p. 297, lines 39–58. For the most interesting phenomenon of Chomatenos' diverse legal argumentation, see Ruth J. Macrides, "Bad Historian or Good Lawyer? Demetrios Chomatenos and Novel 131," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992), 187–96.

52 Austin, *How to Do Things*, pp. 5–22; Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*, 20–1, 49, 137.

to be reasserted, negotiated, and redistributed in the conventional process of inter-legitimization between different types of actors and institutions.

Many questions, such as that of perlocution, or the actual change the active words of letters or literature could make in the world, have to remain open for the time being. However, I must conclude that the letters, private, administrative, and diplomatic, in the form that reached our time, were as much a story as they were active words. The narrative is always inside the letter, and there is no letter without a narrative around it. Neither the real letters nor the embedded ones could function or should be read and interpreted outside of the narrative context in which they were placed. And the narrative parts themselves need to be reinterpreted since from this point of view they become as performative as the directives, commissives, or declaratives they encircle. We can see only the tip of the iceberg of communication when reading a letter. However, the narrative part of the documents, metanarrative of the collection, or the literary work in which a document is embedded allow us to gaze at the sea surrounding that iceberg. This is already a good starting point. It can help us understand that doing politics in the Byzantine and surrounding worlds was, more often than not, actually telling it. We must bear this in mind when we tell it ourselves.

Laughing up the Sleeve: The Image of the Emperor and Ironic Discourse in George Pachymeres' *Historia*

Maria Rukavichnikova

1 Introduction

The topic of emotions in Byzantium is of great interest to anyone dealing with Byzantine historiography.¹ As historical writings are perceived as literary creations,² the link between the authors' emotions and artistic means as well as the narrative structures they use to express their feelings should be investigated. One of the complex artistic devices employed in order to convey historians' emotions is irony.³ This paper, therefore, has several primary tasks. The first is to reveal the means by which George Pachymeres expresses his (resentful) opinion of Michael VIII Palaiologos' personality. The second is to establish how ironic discourse underlying the emperor's image functions in the narrative. Particularly, it is crucial to investigate how the aforementioned discourse correlates with the classical trends (namely, the *eiron* – *alazon* model), and if George Pachymeres's authorial strategy represents a certain turning point in the way the Byzantines conceptualized their literary pursuits.

1 The topic of medieval emotions and approaches to it are discussed, for instance, in Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107.3 (2002), pp. 821–45. On Byzantine emotions, see Martin Hinterberger, "Emotions in Byzantium," in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Chichester, 2010), pp. 123–34. For ancient Greek emotions, see David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto, 2007).

2 See, for example, Ruth Macrides, *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010).

3 On the topic of Byzantine irony, see, for instance, Przemysław Marciniak, "Laughing Against All the Odds: Humour and Religion in Byzantium," in *Humour and Religion: Challenges and Ambiguities*, eds. H. Geybels and W. Van Herck (London, 2011), pp. 141–55; Przemysław Marciniak, "The Byzantine Sense of Humour," in *Humor in der arabischen Kultur*, ed. G. Tamer (Berlin, 2009), pp. 127–35. One of the first to draw attention to the subject of irony in Byzantine historiography was Alexander Kazhdan; see Alexander Kazhdan, "Smeyalis' li vizantiyt-sy? (Homo Byzantinus ludens)" [Did Byzantines Laugh?], in *Drugiye Sredniye veka* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 185–97.

Jakov Ljubarskij and Alexander Kazhdan pioneered the method applied in this research. These researchers focused on Byzantine historiography of earlier periods. Nevertheless, their approach, when applied to later historical writings, reveals new aspects of Byzantine texts. In compliance with their ideas, in this paper, an image will be regarded as a complex entity created with the help of various artistic means. Ljubarskij and Kazhdan examined the unique modes of image construction used by various historians.⁴ The employment of this method is especially effective in the case of authors with a specific agenda and creative style of writing. George Pachymeres' manner is an instance of such a unique (ironic) literary style.

To achieve his main goal – describe the emperor's human character to the fullest – along with the simple, yet effective, ways, Pachymeres employs complex artistic means (irony and metaphor in particular). In the *Historia*, Pachymeres creates ironic discourse using the relationship between the *eiron* and the *alazon* as a basis for his reflection.⁵ Although he does not use these terms explicitly, in the *Historia*, Pachymeres occasionally tries on the mask of the *eiron* and presents Michael VIII as the *alazon*. Ironic discourse is employed to outline Michael VIII's main features. A comic effect usually emerges when the external and the internal sides contradict each other. Pachymeres, in his *Historia*, demonstrates that the image of an ideal emperor and Michael VIII's real personality do not match. The dissonance between the real and the ideal and the mechanism behind the mismatching effect (the ground for Pachymeres' humour) can be understood through the image of Michael VIII that the historian creates.

2 Michael VIII – an Emperor-hypocrite

The author's special focus on the main characters is particularly transparent. His *Historia* (written between the late 13th and early 14th centuries) is not called "world history" but is marked as a biography of two emperors: Michael and Andronikos Palaiologoi. Personality indeed becomes the focus of the author's reflection, and the narrative is tightly organized around the image of these two emperors.

4 In his works devoted to Michael Psellos' writings, J.N. Ljubarskij provided one striking example of such an analysis, giving a deep insight into the historian's original literary style.

5 On the *eiron* – *alazon* model, see Jakov Ljubarskij, "Manuil I glazami Kinnama i Khoniata" [Manuel I in the Eyes of Kinnamos and Choniates], *Vizantijskiy vremennik* 64 (2005), 99–109.

P. Magdalino states that from the 11th century onwards, images of rulers became more and more individualized. In the late Byzantine world, an emperor was frequently seen not as a semidivine creature, but as a human – and, what is more, a personality.⁶

Michael VIII, as presented by Pachymeres, is the opposite of the ideal emperor. In a nutshell, the historian seems to try to describe an *enfant terrible* of Byzantium, who is cruel instead of philanthropic, gullible instead of prudent, insidious instead of frank – but, above all, who is hypocritical to the bone, always trying to hide behind a mask of an ideal emperor. Interestingly, Michael Psellos is another historian who talks about the mask hypocrites use as a cover – the classical *topoi* were obviously closely connected with the concept of hypocrisy in the Byzantine mentality. J. Ljubarskij describes a certain type of emperor introduced by Michael Psellos – an emperor-hypocrite. The scholar divides the type into two subtypes: emperors who fool themselves and suffer from it, and emperors who are cunning and cover their true faces with an ideal picture, at the same time committing horrific crimes.⁷ Michael VIII certainly belongs to the second subtype. His hypocrisy and pretence (ἡ προσποίησις) is underlined throughout the text, along with his cunningness and cruelty.

Pachymeres describes Michael VIII as a man who charms everyone with flattery and gifts. Michael's vanity combined with constant fear for his life leads to him always being suspicious of everybody. Pachymeres tries to reveal the emperor's true motives and concludes that Michael is terrified of being dethroned, underlining his cowardice.⁸ Michael VIII's suspiciousness is the reason for his repeated acts of rage: the emperor brutally punishes everybody who gives him even the smallest reason to doubt them.⁹ Pachymeres complains that he should write about those times using tears as ink: “τὰ δ' ἐκείνῳ τότε πραττόμενα δακρύοις μᾶλλον ἢ μέλανι γράφειν ἦν ἄξιον.”¹⁰

Further along in the text, the author provides the reader with atrocious examples of Michael's cruelty: the emperor does not hesitate to order blindings and executions on very shaky grounds.¹¹ The emperor tries to justify his

6 Paul Magdalino, “Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik,” *Speculum* 58 (1983), 327.

7 Jakov Ljubarskij, “Istoricheskiy geroy v ‘Khronographii’ Mikhaila Psella” [Historical Character in Michael Psellos’ *Chronography*], *Vizantiyskiy vremennik* 33 (1972), 106–9.

8 George Pachymères, *Relations Historique* 1.28, 1.29, ed. and trans. Albert Failler and Vitalien Laurent, 5 vols. (Paris, 1984), 1:113.

9 *Ibidem*, 6.24, 2:615–9.

10 *Ibidem*, 2:611.

11 *Ibidem*, 2:615–9.

actions in many ways. Pachymeres highlights that the emperor's guilt in front of his subjects is aggravated, as with great power comes great responsibility: the historian states that there is no Byzantium without an emperor, given that the ruler is just like the heart for the human body: "ἀβασιλεύτοις γὰρ οὐδὲ ξυνήνεγκε ζῆν, ὡς σώματι μὴ καρδίαν ἔχοντι."¹² George Pachymeres figuratively describes the situation, saying that the emperor not only disdains the correction of misdeeds, but also considers it best for those horrific events to continue. Besides, he expects everyone to behave in the way he does.¹³

One of the simplest artistic ways that Pachymeres employs to create the image of the emperor in the *Historia* is the indirect speech of the characters in question. The author incorporates Michael's phrases into the text. For instance, when Michael VIII is exiled by Theodore Laskaris, the writer describes the future emperor's thoughts about the reasons for his return to Constantinople.¹⁴ Indirect speech included in the text is likely to have been composed by Pachymeres himself, as the writer was not privy to the emperor's deepest thoughts and fears. Through indirect speech the author expresses his opinion, illustrating his view on the subject.

Trying to uncover the true motives behind the emperor's horrific deeds, the author includes separate episodes in a revealing context. The historian puts together the facts (deeds and their consequences) without further explanation, in such a way that the reader can clearly see the true nature of people and things. Pachymeres cites Michael's tirade towards Manuel Holobolos (a rhetorician) in a context that clarifies the ruler's psychological motives.¹⁵ The monarch's rage is caused by the fact that the person he humiliated dares to fight back – the reader is provided with an example of the ruler's pure selfishness and bad temper.

The key features of Michael VIII's character become apparent when the author shows the ruler's relationships. In order to demonstrate these traits, Pachymeres narrates provocations arranged by Michael VIII. The episode about the emperor's favourite serves as the most vivid example. Additionally, using the description of the ruler's interaction with his sisters, the writer unveils the deepest atrocious motives behind the emperor's deeds.

The plot of the first of the abovementioned episodes is as follows: Michael falls in love with a noble woman named Anna (Manfred of Sicily's sister) and desperately seeks her attention, but she resents his love and even states that his

12 Ibidem, 6.24, 2:619.

13 Ibidem.

14 Ibidem, 1.11, 1:47.

15 Ibidem, 5.20, 2:501–3.

love is beneath her. According to Pachymeres, absorbed with his passion, the emperor invents a chain of plausible pretexts, explaining that his divorce from his lawful wife and new marriage are in the state's best interests. Considering the situation in Byzantine foreign policy at the time, those pretexts presented by the historian as if they were complete lies might not have been entirely untrue. Nevertheless, in accordance with his idea of Michael as a hopeless hypocrite, Pachymeres describes the situation as yet another trick that the emperor tries and fails to perform. His wife manages to find out about his intentions and in desperation addresses her complaints to the Patriarch. Pachymeres quotes the Patriarch's threats to excommunicate the monarch, imposing chastity on him as a hopelessly rotten soul. The emperor has to disavow his opinion.¹⁶

The emperor's relationship with his sisters seems idyllic. The historian states that his elder sister, Maria, is like a mother to Michael. Another one, Eulogia, cares about him even more than the former. At their request, the ruler favours a lot of people, as he always values their advice, especially that coming from Eulogia. However, this entire idyll is given totally opposite overtones when the reader is informed about all the evil that the ruler does following his sisters' advice: for example, he strikes a young prince blind so that he cannot overthrow him.¹⁷

The abovementioned episodes show that the emperor is surrounded and influenced by people even more evil than he is (his tender feelings towards them are not a coincidence: they are very much alike). A common excuse used in Byzantine historiography (the *topoi*) – bad advisors – is rethought by Pachymeres in order to serve his intention to unveil the emperor's true identity.

The description of the emperor's relationships allows the author to deepen the image, show how the monarch is perceived and disclose once again the motives behind some of Michael's actions. In the *Historia*, the emperor is surrounded not only by his contemporaries, but is also placed in a row with some classical characters. Describing Michael VIII's personal qualities with the help of the classical mask metaphor, George Pachymeres lists a considerable number of ancient Graeco-Roman rulers as examples. Michael turns out to belong to the same group as Agamemnon, Oedipus, Adrastus, and others – that is why, in the author's opinion, the Byzantine ruler brings so much suffering to his people, because he is just like the cursed ones.¹⁸ The characters and real rulers all considered together, as well as Michael, seem to be characters in a big

16 Ibidem, 3,7, 1:245–9.

17 Ibidem, 2,23, 1:179–81.

18 Ibidem, 3,9, 1:253–5.

theater of life for Pachymeres – that is why the author does not distinguish the fictional characters from the real ones.

Throughout their lives, the characters in the *Historia* are able to disguise their true identities under various masks, while the core of their souls remains intact. The mask metaphor is recurrent in the text. For instance, it occurs in one of Michael VIII's speeches. The emperor argues that Byzantines only pretend to be loyal to their emperor, while, in fact, their loyalty is just a mask. Being hypocritical, the emperor says so trying to justify his cruelty towards certain people.¹⁹

3 Reading further Between the Lines

If one were to look for kind and harmless laughter in Pachymeres' writing, the disappointment would be significant, as it is hardly present in the *Historia*. On the other hand, intellectual irony (George Pachymeres belonged to the intellectual elite of the empire) – carefully hidden and noticeable only to the knowing eye, as well as mixed with anger at the hypocritical ruler and inseparable from his image – manifests itself brightly.

Seamlessly woven into the image of the main character – Michael VIII – ironic discourse emerges on the border of the ideal and the real, created on two levels of the narrative: on the level of the plot and that of style. As was mentioned above, the irony is meant to be relatively discreet, so its appearance in the text is of a sporadic, not consistent nature. Alexander Kazhdan says that this intermittent irony is characteristic of the epoch, especially of its epistolary culture.²⁰

Taking into account the whole body of Pachymeres' text, one may notice that laughter emerges occasionally, though its object does not lie in the common area of medieval comic culture: it is not about physical deficiency or misfortunes of any kind.²¹ Now and then, there appear comments on somebody's laughing or tricks done for laughs. Nevertheless, those rare occurrences can be

19 Ibidem, 4.1, 2:331.

20 Kazhdan, "Smeyalis' li vizantiytsy?," p. 191. On epistolary tradition and humour in it, see Margaret Mullett, "The Classical Tradition in the Byzantine Letter," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Roger Scott (Oxford, 1981), pp. 75–93; Francis Bernard, "Humor in Byzantine Letters (10th–12th centuries): Some Preliminary Remarks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69 (2015), pp. 179–96.

21 Jakov Ljubarskij, "The Byzantine Irony: The Case of Michael Psellos," in *Βυζάντιο, κράτος και κοινωνία. Μνήμη Νίκου Οικονομίδη*, eds. A. Avramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos (Athens, 2003), p. 349.

counted by the fingers of one hand. For instance, when the relics of emperor Basil II are accidentally found in a sheepfold that used to be a church, the author states that somebody, obviously, for fun, put a shepherd's pipe into the mouth of the corpse.²² On another occasion, Pachymeres describes how villagers laughed at the ambitions of the future Bulgarian ruler nicknamed Lakhanas when the Bulgarian was just a swineherd.²³

As most of Pachymeres' irony is subtle, the rare cases when he directly calls something or someone funny become even more curious. Describing the groundless optimism and ignorance of Patriarch Germanus III, whom the emperor wishes to depose, the historian states that Germanus' behaviour is quite amusing. The writer goes on to draw a metaphorical analogy between the Patriarch's actions and those of a man fallen from a ship while he was trying to save himself by snatching at seaweed.²⁴

However subtle and sporadic the laughter and the irony might be, it is doubtless, nonetheless, that the text was constructed intentionally in this specific manner. The author sounds almost like a playwright when he comments on the structure of his work. At one point, the historian considers it necessary to show the reader the prehistory of the events described and says so: "Ἡ δὲ ἦν ..., ἀλλ' ἀνακτέον τὸν λόγον, ἵν' εὐμαθέστετερον τῶν προκειμένων ἔχοιμεν."²⁵ When Pachymeres inserts the episode devoted to the emperor's feelings towards Anna, he disrupts the sequence of events, mentioning that it is vital to talk about Anna first.²⁶ Even the narrative structure that Jacov Ljubarskij considers traditional (simple juxtaposition of events without any obvious conjunction)²⁷ serves the author's main intention – to belittle Michael VIII – when employed by Pachymeres.

It turns out that the idea of Providence, which, according to Jacov Ljubarskij, is also one of the narrative structures, also conveys the author's ironic attitude. Used to unite various events, the concept of fate in the *Historia* serves as a frame for the author's irony. Clearly, it is the case with the storyline of Michael VIII as well. The emperor cannot escape his destiny (its retribution, to be exact): he dies a painful death in the hometown of Pachomios, the man he had previously unfairly blinded. The author sarcastically states that the place

22 Ibidem, 2.21, 1:175.

23 Ibidem, 6.3, 2:549.

24 Ibidem, 4.18, 2:381.

25 Ibidem, 1.11, 1:53.

26 Ibidem, 3.7, 1:245.

27 Jakov Ljubarskij, "Quellenforschung' and/or Literary Criticism. Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings," in *Istoriki i pisateli Vizantii (VI – XI veka)* (Saint Petersburg, 2012), p. 382.

reminds Michael VIII of the man whose name turned out to be fatal for him.²⁸ Additionally, fate may be capable of irony. On one occasion, the historian states that the prophecy about the need to urgently restore a city on the banks of the Maeander River and its future prosperity is nothing but fate's mockery. The city is subsequently destroyed, and all the citizens are killed.²⁹

At first glance, in spite of the author's ironic attitude, the main character – Michael VIII – might seem to be more of a mocker, not a person who suffers from ridicule. Once, Michael is even called a mocker directly. In the episode where the ruler tries to win the Pope's favour, Pachymeres briefly mentions that the emperor and his party are excommunicated and sent away at the end of the negotiations, perceived as mockers (Pachymeres employs the word “ὁ χλευαστής”) and cruel people, who follow the path of executions and cruelty instead of that of the truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια).³⁰

In its turn, mockery is something the characters in the *Historia* try to avoid at all costs. The thought of becoming a joke seems unbearable to the capturers of sultan Azatin as they consider various ways of resolving the conflict with the emperor.³¹ Another episode describes panic in Nicaea. As the locals are trying to find out the origin of the rumour of a vicious attack on their city, they are mocked by the gate keepers. Consequently, they are ashamed, disavow their opinion, and change their erratic behaviour, finally thinking logically.³²

Notwithstanding, emperor Michael VIII is in the lead when it comes to rejecting even the slightest sign of irony. Pachymeres constantly underlines that the main motive of the ruler's actions is his fear of being laughed at. The emperor secretly asks the active Patriarch to find out the thoughts and wishes of the high-rank church official who is being considered for the patriarch's position. When a messenger brings him the news about the seizure of Constantinople, Michael VIII immediately thinks of the mockery that might follow if he believes the news at once. Naturally, he decides to delay actions and orders the messenger to be thrown into prison while waiting for some sort of confirmation of the Byzantines' victory.³³ Moreover, the emperor genuinely suspects that he is being played and laughed at even when the Patriarch refuses to lift his excommunication as if it were a simple matter. He speaks his mind in front of the church hierarchs.³⁴ Stricken with the same fear, deeply affected by the

28 George Pachymères, *Relations Historique* 6.36, 2:663.

29 Ibidem, 6.20, 2:520.

30 Ibidem, 6.30, 2:637.

31 Ibidem, 3.25, 1:309.

32 Ibidem, 3.28, 1:323.

33 Ibidem, 2.29, 1:207.

34 Ibidem, 4.1, 2:251.

mocking remarks of the enemy, Michael wraps up the siege of the Galata fortress, which is unfortunate for the Byzantines. The emperor values appearance so much that he even considers it best to retreat without any agreement with the enemy. More than anything he wishes to put up a good show as well as needing a legitimate reason to start war all over again under more favourable conditions.³⁵ When the battle of Bosporus against the Genoese takes a disastrous turn, Michael's pride is wounded again: he feels as if subjected to humiliation and mockery.³⁶

At the same time, it is Michael – one of the two main characters of the *Historia* and the central figure of the narrative in the first part of the text – who is the main target of the author's humour. The image of the emperor is strongly tied to ironic discourse in Pachymeres' text. For instance, once, the lies the emperor makes up are called ridiculous.³⁷ Yet again the historian subordinates the structure of the text to the realization of his primary intention – to mock the vainglorious Michael VIII. Considering the author's transparent contempt of the character, the reader should not take Pachymeres' explicit seriousness, lofty style, and elevated vocabulary at face value. The historian repeatedly employs all of the above to highlight Michael VIII's mistakes, creating a contrast between the high style of the narrative and the ruler's low intentions. To elaborate these statements, one should remember the storyline of the confrontation with Charles I that includes the description of the emperor's triumph.

The writer cannot but inform the reader that Michael is scared half to death at the sight of his numerous enemies before a battle that turns out victorious for him in the end. The historian states that the ruler is shaken to the core. Of course, according to the author, the emperor has no choice but be scared as his opponents are enraged. In a very metaphorical and elaborate way, the writer explains that the news about stone-throwing machines prepared by the enemy reaches Michael's ears with the speed of the wind, and the hostile warriors are like fire fuelled by oil – unstoppable and impudent. The high style and exaggerated figurativeness can suggest the idea that Pachymeres is ironic from the very first lines of the episode. Further on, the historian describes how, facing his numerous enemies, the emperor cannot think of anything better to do than mobilize all his troops (including navy personnel) and send them on a campaign by land, staying behind himself. As if it was not enough, the author lets slip a remark, inevitably making his genuine intentions clear – he says that the emperor does so for the warriors' inevitable deaths at the very beginning

35 Ibidem, 2.20, 1:175.

36 Ibidem, 5.30, 2:520.

37 Ibidem, 5.3, 2:443.

of the war to at least become beneficial. It is noteworthy that it takes the writer only half a sentence to conduct this sarcastic devaluation of the emperor's behaviour as opposed to the whole previous passage, a massive form, created to contrast the pitiful cowardice of Michael VIII.³⁸

Similarly to the previous part, Pachymeres provides a verbose description of the pompous ceremony held after the victory. The emperor seemingly devotes the triumph to God's glory, strategically placing himself at the centre of everybody's admiration. Even having demonstrated cowardly behaviour on the battlefield, the ruler cannot keep himself from boasting. The episode goes as follows: in front of the Blachernae Palace there stands the emperor, gazing at the defeated warriors that are being led in front of him with fake weapons in their hands. Not only are they subjected to the humiliation of a public parade, but also each and every one of them is forced to bow in front of the emperor as they march by. Pachymeres underlines that the particular place for the emperor to stand on during the triumph is chosen so that everybody can see him.³⁹ If one were to take into account the characteristics of Pachymeres' style and world outlook, it would be obvious that here we are dealing not with eulogy but with a simulated adoption of a laudatory tone for the purpose of ridicule. The historian consciously takes on the role of a typical *ieron* in relation to his traditional partner, the *alazon*.⁴⁰ Though in the *Historia* Pachymeres creates an image of a hypocrite and does not call Michael VIII the *alazon* a single time, his view of the emperor is definitely that of the *ieron*. In the plot, the writer provides examples of how the emperor demonstrates hypocrisy and cowardice, secretly laughing at him.

While one can find the type of the *ieron* and *alazon* interaction between the author and Michael VIII in the text, Pachymeres puts on the mask of the *ieron* only episodically. The case of the writer's ironic attitude towards Michael can easily be observed in the part of the *Historia* when the emperor makes a deal with the chieftain of one of the nearby tribes. The historian later reveals that the consequences of that deal are disastrous: as a result of it, a few cities are destroyed. George Pachymeres, while showing the reader that it is foolish of the emperor to make the deal, ironically mentions that the Christians have gained an advantage due to the emperor's actions: "καὶ ταῦτα μὲν Αἰθίοπων τὸ χριστιανικὸν ἀπώναντο ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἀβουλίαις ἢ κακονοίαις ἢ αὐτονόμοις ὀρμαῖς καὶ ὀρέξεισι."⁴¹ The opposition between how it is put and what it implies is still

38 Ibidem, 6.32, 2:643–9.

39 Ibidem, 6.33, 2:649–53.

40 Jakov Ljubarskij, "Manuil I glazami Kinnama i Khoniata," pp. 105–6 (see note 5).

41 George Pachymèrès, *Relations Historique* 3.5, 1:243.

very much obvious. It does not come as a surprise that when the emperor trusts sultan Azatin and walks right into a trap, almost losing his life in the process, the historian seemingly rhetorically yet deeply sarcastically questions whether the emperor could suspect any treachery on Azatin's part.⁴² Subsequently, the author hints that Michael should have suspected something.

The author's view of the emperor is clear to the reader: Pachymeres resents Michael for his poor judgement and hypocrisy. Constructing the emperor's image, he gives himself away as the *ieron*. Pachymeres does not only establish a storyline that reveals the ruler's characteristic features, but also employs artistic means to create ironic discourse. He uses stylistic devices based on juxtaposition and comparison, obvious or hidden (antithesis and metaphor, among others).

To create an ironic overtone, George Pachymeres turns to the aforementioned systematic methodology, which simultaneously seems to be among the organizing principles of the narrative, given the historian's admiration of juxtaposition. The author includes single episodes in a revealing context to uncover the true motives of the emperor's horrific deeds, putting together the facts (deeds and their consequences) without further explanation and in such a way that the reader can clearly see the true nature of things, as well as the author's ironic attitude towards the emperor. For instance, the historian cites Michael VIII boasting about his modesty. The phrase is surrounded by a context that provides clarity to the reader: Michael says that in order to show his (fake) asceticism and cover up bribes, he gave freely to gain support, taking money from the treasury.⁴³

The historian shows Michael's reasoning behind the execution of a tribal leader, Kotanicza. The emperor reasons with himself, stating that if he did not make an oath, he is not responsible for keeping it. Additionally, he reflects on the situation and concludes that he does not owe Kotanicza anything, and, what is more, the tribal leader is dangerous. Being an evil man, the latter sees only evil around him and will neither appreciate good attitude, nor submit himself to the emperor's power.⁴⁴ Once again, the emperor tries to hide his true insidious intentions behind beautiful phrases. But in the context, skilfully created by the writer, Michael's philosophical statements look almost ridiculous, and the episode's tonality appears ironic.

Another example of such a bitter, yet humorous juxtaposition is the previously mentioned storyline of the emperor's relationship with one of his sisters,

42 Ibidem, 3.25, 1:303–5.

43 Ibidem, 1.25, 1:101–3.

44 Ibidem, 6.27, 2:627.

Eulogia. At one point in the text, the author declares her the mastermind behind the majority of executions Michael conducts.⁴⁵ At another point, she tries to wake the emperor by gently touching his toe in order not to cause him any harm that may come from sudden awakening.⁴⁶ What catches the reader's eye is how multilayered Pachymeres' narrative is: behind the obvious *topoi* (bad advisors) there is an ironic twist to the storyline of Michael's relationship with his sisters.

In this episode, the historian demonstrates an even higher level of craftsmanship when he skilfully uses two literary techniques simultaneously. Here, along with juxtaposition, one more of Pachymeres' artistic principles comes to the forefront again. It is the same as in the episode with the triumph, though in this case the subject of the author's elevated praises is much more trivial. Ljubarskij describes this variation of the principle as one used by Niketas Choniates.⁴⁷ Pachymeres deliberately creates incredibly long high-flown passages, devoted to the most common and ordinary situations (such as the toe-touching moment, which is essentially a man waking up in the morning) in order to show the pretentious nature of his characters. Strikingly (and unlike Choniates), the historian pairs those wordy and beautifully put together passages with terse phrases, usually depicting a totally opposite situation (as in the idyllic episode with Eulogia preceded by a brief comment on her horrific deeds). If the comparison of Pachymeres to a playwright made above were to be developed, one may say that the terse phrases Pachymeres uses are reminiscent of stage directions made by playwrights in their texts.

Ljubarskij underlines that in case of Choniates, elevated episodes are total fiction inserted by the historian in order to make his point.⁴⁸ Obviously, this is also the case with Pachymeres, as the historian is unlikely to have witnessed such intimate moments of Michael VIII's life. There is yet another reason for Pachymeres to include private episodes in the narrative. According to Kazhdan, Byzantine comic discourse is based on paradoxes and inconsistencies between the godlike image of the emperor and his private life. Therefore, ironic discourse is frequently employed to diminish the ruler's image.⁴⁹

The method of "indirect criticism" (when the author leaves revelations and accusations for other characters to pronounce)⁵⁰ constitutes another ground

45 Ibidem, 2.23, 1:179–81.

46 Ibidem, 2.29, 1:207.

47 Jakov Ljubarskij, "Manuil I glazami Kinnama i Khoniata," 106–7.

48 Ibidem.

49 Alexander Kazhdan, "Smeyalis' li vizantiytsy? (Homo Byzantinus ludens)" (see note 20), p. 192.

50 Jakov Ljubarskij, "Manuil I glazami Kinnama i Khoniata," p. 106.

for comparison of Choniates and Pachymeres. Pachymeres' approach to indirect criticism is slightly more diverse than that of Choniates. While the latter omits the names of the accusing characters altogether, using their negative characteristics as a mask for his own irony, Pachymeres does not hesitate to identify the figures by name. Such a connection makes it possible to maintain a certain dramatic effect of multiple characters conveying the author's ideas. This means of creating ironic discourse seems to be a simple way for the writer to express his opinion seriously and directly. Nevertheless, a slight comic effect results as usual from the contrast between the elevated style of the characters' speeches and the real-life low intentions of the emperor.

The ruler's duplicity shows when Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos, answering the request to relieve the emperor of excommunication, describes Michael with a metaphor. The hierarch says that while he thought he dealt with a dove, this dove turned into a serpent and bit him right in the heart. The author readily cites the Patriarch (or is it Pachymeres' own thoughts?): "Ὁ δ' ὑπερέωρα τὴν δέησιν καὶ οὐδ' ὄλως προσεῖχε περιστερὰν γὰρ βαλεῖν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ἔφη κακείνην, μετασχηματισθεῖσαν εἰς ὄφιν, δῆξαι πρὸς θάνατον."⁵¹ The historian outlines that by these two animals (the dove and the serpent) the Patriarch means one and the same person – Michael VIII. Here one can clearly see an example of "indirect criticism" when the author "delegates" his mockery to fictional characters. Indeed, at first it may seem a simple case of Pachymeres' explicitly speaking out in frustration, putting his own words into the character's mouth. Notwithstanding, there is more to it than an unprepared reader can see. High-style wording and emphatic constructions along with elevated metaphors and comparisons, introducing biblical imagery (the dove and the serpent), should once again seem suspicious to the attentive researcher. They are the core of the artistic principle Pachymeres consistently follows, combining it with every artistic tool he employs. Elevated speech plays the greatest role in creating a comic effect, which, as was determined earlier, relies on the contradiction between Michael's limitless pretensions and paltry motives for his actions – the contrast Ljubarskij studied.⁵² Another instance where Pachymeres uses all of the above (including biblical discourse) is when he directly compares the money Michael sends to the Pope's cardinals to hinges, saying that they opened the Pope's door to Christ. Here, making the allusion to Christ's expression about being the door,⁵³ the historian underlines the falsity of the emperor's godliness.

51 George Pachymères, *Relations Historique* 3.19, 1:281.

52 See Jakov Ljubarskij, "How Should a Byzantine Text Be Read?," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 117–25.

53 John 10:9.

Paul Magdalino asserts that the “*topoi* might actually serve to underline the importance of what was said, by giving it the stamp of universal truth and finding a place for it in the hierarchy of political, religious, and literary orthodoxy.”⁵⁴

As a matter of fact, there is one case of Pachymeres employing the Choniates type of “indirect criticism” where a faceless anonymous entity conveys the author’s ideas. Nonetheless, the former adds his unique touch, surrounding his opinion with many others’, as opposed to Choniates. During the previously analyzed episode of the triumph, the historian makes it a point to describe various opinions on the defeated warriors’ parade expressed by the crowd. Rather unsurprisingly, among the viewers there turn out to be some people who consider the whole event a demonstration of arrogance on behalf of the emperor, arrogance that seldom causes good.⁵⁵

Throughout the text, the author makes the shift between the ruler’s appearances and reality obvious and sets an ironic tone. Employing antitheses, Pachymeres expresses the tone in a more complex way than elementary juxtaposition. Usually, as was mentioned above, it is the noble appearance and the insidious intentions behind Michael’s actions that are set against each other. For instance, when the ruler takes over the throne, he starts giving away lots of gifts – not because he cares about his subjects, but only to gain people’s trust and favour.⁵⁶ Sending the wives and children of an ally of his with an escort to Nicaea, Michael pretends to care about their safety when in fact he wants to blackmail the ally in order to stop him from fleeing the country.⁵⁷ The emperor does not let his followers execute Holobolos, seemingly out of philanthropy, but it turns out that Michael just delays his revenge until more convenient circumstances present themselves, and then subjects Holobolos to cruel and inhuman torture.⁵⁸ Notably, the author does not elaborate much on Holobolos’ image or include any of the speeches of the renowned rhetorician in the *Historia*.

The historian highlights the abovementioned shift between Michael’s behaviour and reality using a previously mentioned metaphor. Pachymeres describes the rulers who only pretend to be royal, hiding behind a mask, and lists quite an extensive group, enriching the text with classical allusions – another *sine qua non* of a comic effect’s creation.⁵⁹ To keep up appearances, those rulers have to be benefactors to everybody to avoid being blamed or exposed. The

54 Paul Magdalino, “Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik,” p. 328 (see note 6).

55 George Pachymérès, *Relations Historique* 6.33, 2:649–53.

56 *Ibidem*, 1.26, 1:105.

57 *Ibidem*, 2.24, 1:185.

58 *Ibidem*, 5.20, 2:503–5.

59 Jakov Ljubarskij, “How Should a Byzantine Text Be Read?,” p. 123 (see note 55).

author develops the metaphor, surrounding it by comparisons, using the term “ephemeral” rulers and elaborating on a mask they hide behind. The metaphor is followed by a description of the emperor’s feelings and the motives behind his actions. Those motives become crystal clear after the writer makes the remark about Michael being an actor on the throne who should behave according to his role.⁶⁰ The historian juxtaposes the image of an ideal emperor with Michael VIII’s real personality.

4 Conclusion

George Pachymeres builds a multilayered narrative that forms the organizing principle of the text, i.e. juxtaposition. The historian is completely focused on the personality of the emperor Michael VIII, and to characterize him, he uses various artistic means (including irony) in multiple combinations, which allows him to describe the ruler to the fullest, employing his unique style of depicting historical figures.

At first glance, humour is hardly present in Pachymeres’ *Historia*. Nonetheless, ironic discourse exists in the text – moreover, it is multidimensional, though subtle at the same time. A complex and varied phenomenon, ironic discourse lies in the subtext of the *Historia*, a hidden gem meant for the eyes of fellow intellectuals. Generally speaking, the kind of irony Pachymeres employs represents a certain trend that is quite evident, judging by the pronounced nature of intellectual irony in the historical writings of Choniates, Psellos, and Pachymeres and numerous letters of many learned men.

While strict lines cannot be drawn (as is usually the case when one is dealing with humour), given the fact that laughter is an overtone in the *Historia*, there are still grounds to conclude that irony is at least one of the pillars of Pachymeres’ unique outlook and literary style. With the help of a sophisticated set of artistic devices and their combinations, the historian creates ironic discourse in his text quite frequently as well as presenting the reader with his own interpretation of the classical *ieron – alazon* model. The historian does not reproduce it literally. Pachymeres takes the textual form in its essence and creates a narrative shot with irony focusing on Michael VIII. The author fulfils his role of the *ieron*: he lines up a chain of events surrounded by a revealing context around the emperor, and sets up a net of various artistic means as if laughing up the sleeve at Michael VIII.

60 George Pachymères, *Relations Historique* 3.9, 1:253–5.

PART 3

Constructing Politics



The Roman Revolution: Leo I, Theodosius II and the Contest for Power in the 5th Century

David Barritt

The decline of the Roman state during the depredations of the 5th century, along with the separation of the empire into two parts from Theodosius I onwards, introduced new questions about how power should be understood, and about where the poles of authority lay in the Roman Empire. The two best examples of the new discourse of authority brought on by these developments are two roughly contemporaneous figures, the emperor Theodosius II in the eastern empire (408–50), and Pope Leo I in the western empire (440–61). As shall be explored below, both of these rulers and their advisors and assistants pioneered new forms of self-representation and legitimation, through various media, in an attempt to justify their power and authority over the Roman Empire. This was done, however, in different ways. At Theodosius' court in Constantinople, the emphasis of production seems to have been on quintessentially 'Roman' culture, with the various outputs of the emperor and his close circle focusing their attentions on the glories of Roman civilization, including areas such as law (exemplified most obviously by the production of the Theodosian Code), administration and government. Pope Leo's broadcasts from Rome, however, were rather different. As against the eastern empire's emphasis on the 'mechanisms of power' of the Roman state, Leo's surviving works seem to show a clear emphasis on the personal authority of one man (Leo), rather than that of any collective government or administration.

It is the central contention of this article that these differences of emphasis underlie a fundamental parting of the ways in the discourse of authority in the later Roman world. Whereas previous work on Leo I has tended to emphasize the supposed 'legalistic' aspects of the 'Petrine Doctrine' that he developed, with the concept of the pope deriving his authority from inheriting the powers of Peter entrusted to him by Christ, through the processes of Roman law, this study shall instead attempt to demonstrate the 'personal authority' inherent in Leo's thought, as set out in his surviving writings.¹ This 'personal authority',

¹ This is inspired by Max Weber's idea of charismatic authority: Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 241ff.

it shall be argued, contrasts with the 'juridical authority' which seems to be more prevalent in the strategies of legitimation by Theodosius and his court in Constantinople. Thus, whereas previous scholarship has played up the 5th century power struggle between the eastern and western empires, this is based on a fundamental category error in interpreting what Leo was trying to do. Ultimately, it shall be argued, an interesting and novel way of understanding Leo's papacy is to see it in the context of these competing discourses of authority between the eastern and western empires.

1 Leo: Traditional Views

There has been much previous work on Leo.² Perhaps the most influential investigation is that of Walter Ullmann, who in the 1950s set out a view of Leo as essentially the most important pope of late antiquity and the early middle ages.³ In assessing the power and authority of Leo in contrast to his predecessors, Ullmann says this:

It can be said without fear of contradiction that his authoritative language, his peremptory commands, his unbending and unyielding attitude, mark him out from his predecessors: none of them uses so consistently such strong and commanding language as Leo does. His is the *modus loquendi* of the *gubernator*: he orders, decides, reprehends, deposes, corrects, threatens, defines, sentences, suspends, prescribes ... in short, Leo's language is the language of him who possesses the *gubernacula ecclesiae uniuersalis*: his tone is the tone of him who governs.⁴

Unsurprisingly, this conception of Leo as essentially a Roman *gubernator* is grounded in Ullmann's attempt to find the sources of Leo's idea of papal authority in Roman law. In Ullmann's words, Leo 'erect[ed] a fully-fledged and satisfying doctrine culminating in the juristic succession of the pope to St Peter'.⁵ In Roman law (at least in Ullmann's conception), the *haeres* effec-

2 The two most important works are Walter Ullmann, "Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *JTS* 21(1) (1960), pp. 25–51 and Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden, 2008).

3 Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (3rd edition, London, 1970 [1955]); idem, "Leo", (n.1).

4 Ullmann, "Leo," p. 25.

5 Ibid p. 33.

tively 'replaces' the deceased. Legally, therefore, the deceased person is literally continued by his successor – the law recognizes no difference between them. Ullmann also draws attention to the concept of the *indignus haeres* in Roman law, i.e. someone who for whatever reason has been judged incapable of acting as an heir.⁶ In Ullmann's words:

It is obvious that Leo I had these Roman law models in mind when he expounded the theme of the Petrine commission continuing in the pope ... [the] personal merit of St Peter is absent in his heirs – hence the *indignus haeres*, which concept clearly distinguishes between the person and his office: the latter he has inherited, the former not. To the pope the office, function, and power of St Peter have been transferred *via successionis*, but not his personal merits[.]⁷

Another way of seeing Leo is provided by the art historian Richard Krautheimer, who put forward an 'architectural' view of the development of the late antique papacy. According to Krautheimer, 'Rome by the early 5th century was a Christian city, as any visitor could see.'⁸ In Krautheimer's words:

The See of Rome, as represented by its bishop, was a power of the first magnitude, among the biggest landowners from Provence to North Africa, the spiritual lodestar of the West, and, with the decline of the Empire, forced to fill a power vacuum throughout Italy and Western Europe. *De facto*, if not *de iure*, the Roman bishop was the ruler of the city and of large parts of Italy⁹

This 'empty city' therefore provided an ideal blank canvas onto which late antique popes could paint their picture of how they wanted society to look. This in turn led the papacy to embark on an immense building programme,

6 Ullmann, "Leo," p. 34.

7 Ibid p. 34f. Ullmann's view of Leo has been very influential – see e.g. Mayke de Jong, "Religion," in *The Early Middle Ages*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Oxford, 2001), pp. 131–66, at p. 138; David d'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 56ff, 151f; Stuart George Hall, "The organization of the church," *CAH XIV* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 731–44, at pp. 732ff; as well as the opinions of modern Catholic scholars (e.g. Hans Küng, *The Catholic Church* – see conclusion). It has also clearly colored the arguments of Wessel, *Leo*, to the extent that individual references would be otiose – but for the clearest example see pp. 7ff.

8 Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 94.

9 Ibid p. 103.

financed by their vast landholdings in Latium, throughout the city of Rome.¹⁰ Krautheimer especially emphasizes the various ‘station churches’ built throughout the *regiones* of Rome in the early 5th century as evidence for this papal strategy,¹¹ along with the ‘ecclesiastical zone’ that seems to have developed around the Lateran, the topographical centre of the papacy’s power, in the early 4th century.¹² On Krautheimer’s conception, Leo essentially slots into this *longue durée* model of the development of papal authority – he continues his immediate predecessors’ building programmes in the empty city of Rome, in a (largely successful) attempt to fill the ‘power vacuum’ that arose out of the decline of the western empire and the supposed absence of imperial authority from the city of Rome.

At first glance, both Ullmann’s and Krautheimer’s arguments would appear to be sensible ways of approaching Leo. However, more recent research into 5th century Rome provides material that throws these interpretations into quite radical doubt. In 2001, Andrew Gillett proved beyond reasonable doubt that, contrary to previous assumptions that late antique western emperors ruled from Ravenna, there is in fact a multitude of evidence for their being in Rome instead.¹³ As Gillett demonstrates, in a *constitutio* issued at Rome on 3 March 440, the western emperor Valentinian III (425–55) describes Rome as ‘urbis Romae, quam merito caput nostri ueneramur imperii’.¹⁴ The imperial household relocated to Rome in February 450, and thereafter Valentinian is attested only in Rome.¹⁵ These actions are not consistent with an imperial court which has permanently moved to Ravenna – ‘between 450 and 476 the weight of evidence points to Rome, not Ravenna, as the main imperial residence’.¹⁶ These thoughts on Valentinian’s presence in Rome were subsequently developed by Mark Humphries, who, using a reconstruction of Valentinian’s reign based on dating clauses of legislation issued in his name and preserved in the Theodosian Code, comes to the following conclusion:

At the beginning of his reign, Valentinian spent four months in Rome, from 23 October 425, until 24 February 426. He was there also for three

10 See Marios Costambeys, “Review Article: Property, Ideology and the Territorial Power of the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages,” *EME* 9(3) (2000), pp. 367–96.

11 Krautheimer, *Capitals*, p. 100.

12 *Ibid.* p. 118.

13 Andrew Gillett, “Rome, Ravenna and the Last Western Emperors,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001), pp. 131–67.

14 *Nov. Val.* 5, in Gillett, “Rome,” p. 146.

15 Gillett, “Rome,” p. 147.

16 *Ibid.* p. 162.

months between 24 January and 20 March 440 ... for a further two and a half years, from 18 January 445 to 3 June 447; and, finally, for five years from 21 February 450 until his assassination on 16 March 455 ... All told, he spent at least eight of his twenty-nine and a half years as emperor in the city, or to put it another way, over a quarter of his total reign ... Not since the regime of Maxentius (306–312) had an emperor spent so much time in the ancient heart of the empire.¹⁷

If Gillett and Humphries are correct, and they make extremely convincing cases, this has drastic implications for the views of Leo propagated by Ullmann and Krautheimer. Krautheimer's argument depends on Rome becoming an 'empty city' for its bishop to fill – if the emperors were indeed regularly in Rome during the mid-5th century, this argument starts to look untenable. Ullmann's argument also starts to seem rather unfounded – the appeal to Leo's juridical authority does rather seem to be an attempt to fit him into the mould left by the allegedly absent emperors, and, if emperors were in fact regularly in Rome, there does not seem to be much point in Leo doing this. Furthermore, Ullmann's idea of Leo seeing himself as Peter's *indignus haeres* seems nonsensical. In Roman law, an *indignus haeres* is someone who is unworthy of accepting an inheritance, and is therefore disqualified from doing so.¹⁸ It does not therefore make sense that Leo would choose to present himself thus. Put together, therefore, these serious objections significantly undermine Ullmann's and Krautheimer's conceptions of the late antique papacy essentially 'replacing' the office of the Roman emperors.

But not all hope is lost. In 2012, Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly edited a volume entitled *Two Romes*.¹⁹ This volume is in many ways arguing that the history of the late antique city of Rome cannot be seen in isolation from the parallel development of the eastern 'New Rome', Constantinople. As Grig and Kelly demonstrate, the eastern Roman Empire during the reign of Theodosius II, the longest-reigning Roman emperor, was enjoying something of a boom.²⁰ It is the central contention of this article that the reign of Theodosius II, and the concomitant social, cultural, and intellectual flourishing of the eastern Roman Empire, provides a prism through which Leo I's papacy can profitably

17 Mark Humphries, "Valentinian III and the City of Rome (425–455): Patronage, Politics, Power," in *Two Romes*, eds. L. Grig and G. Kelly (Oxford, 2012), pp. 161–82, at p. 161f, with refs.

18 Bronwen Neil, *Leo the Great* (Abingdon, 2009) p. 39.

19 Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly, eds., *Two Romes* (Oxford, 2012).

20 Eadem, "Introduction: From Rome to Constantinople," in *Two Romes*, eds. L. Grig and G. Kelly (Oxford, 2012) pp. 3–30.

be viewed. Although Ullmann was correct to see the development of a 'Petrine Doctrine' in Leo's sermons and letters, bringing with it an attempt to arrogate authority over the Roman world into Leo's hands, his mistake was to see this strategy as fundamentally founded on Roman law and a juridical notion of authority. Rather, this juridical legitimation was more or less the preserve of the eastern court under the leadership of Theodosius, which seems to have been aiming overall for a legitimation of its rule based on 'juridical authority', and on ideas of the continuity of Roman civilization that they were ensuring. Leo, on the other hand, presents in his extant writings an appeal to something of a more 'personal authority'. It was these competing discourses of authority between the eastern and western empires in the 5th century that provided the fundamental catalysts for the development of both 'papal' and 'imperial' government.

2 The Evidence

One of the reasons Leo's reign is so well-studied is that his is the papacy which has left us the most material from the late antique period, with the exception of Gregory I, with his writings filling a full three volumes of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.²¹ These writings comprise 97 extant sermons and 143 surviving letters.²² There is no serious dispute that the 143 letters attributed to Leo in *Patrologia Latina* are genuine.²³ This volume also includes 19 letters written by correspondents of Leo, including the eastern emperors Marcian and Theodosius II, Theodosius' sister Pulcheria and Valentinian III's mother Galla Placidia, as well as various bishops. The corpus also includes two edicts of Valentinian III (*Letters* 8 and 11), as well as four letters from the western imperial family to Theodosius II requesting a new council, and three refusals from Theodosius (*Letters* 55–58, 62–64). 'From his wide network of correspondents it seems that Leo was a person of considerable influence, in both ecclesiastical and imperial circles'.²⁴ These sermons and letters together, therefore, with their great bulk and almost certain authenticity, provide an extremely exciting body of evidence with which to launch an investigation into Leo's ideology of power.

The state of play in Constantinople is less secure. With the obvious exception of the Theodosian Code, the vast majority of sources for the reign of

²¹ Volumes 54–6.

²² Neil, *Leo*, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Theodosius II have not survived the intervening 1500 years. Most notably, there is no surviving complete narrative source covering his reign – the two most prominent historians active in 5th century Constantinople, Sozomen and Socrates, were both writing primarily about earlier events, and Olympiodorus, whose work only survives in fragments, wrote his history primarily about the western empire. Archaeological evidence, so useful for many other periods of history where the written evidence is less than ideal, is also not especially helpful – although the continued presence of the Catholic Church in Rome has led to 1500 years of investigation into the city's Christian 'origins', successive Ottoman and Turkish governments have been reluctant to archaeologically investigate the Christian origins of Constantinople in the same way.²⁵ This does not mean, however, that we are totally unable to investigate Theodosius' reign at all. The Theodosian Code itself more than makes up for the deficiencies of survival of other pieces of evidence, and the works of Socrates, Sozomen, and Olympiodorus are extremely useful for an investigation of the eastern regime's self-presentation. Although the 5th century's relative dearth of contemporary evidence will never make it an especially popular period of study, we certainly have enough evidence to make some tentative conclusions about ongoing events, which this article shall now attempt to do.

3 Theodosius and Constantinople²⁶

The vignettes of Theodosius preserved (elaborated or invented) by Byzantine chroniclers have reinforced a view of an ineffectual ruler who, careless of matters of state, preferred his faith, his hobbies and his horses. Here is a studious emperor with an aptitude for mathematics and astronomy; an avid bibliophile with remarkably neat handwriting ... Here too is an emperor dominated by the eunuchs of the palace household, all too easily distracted from serious matters, 'just like children with toys'; a ruler so negligently uninterested in reading his official papers before signing them that he once mistakenly authorized his wife to be sold into slavery.²⁷

25 Ward-Perkins, "Old and New," p. 55.

26 This section is heavily influenced by Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2006). Millar's argument, however, is primarily based on the *Acta* of church councils; I have tried to use other pieces of evidence, which admittedly lead to a very similar conclusion to his.

27 Christopher Kelly, "Rethinking Theodosius," in *Theodosius II*, ed. Christopher Kelly (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 3–64, at p. 4f.

Thus goes a recent *summa* of the state of scholarship on Theodosius II, Roman emperor from 408 to 450. More recent research, however, has begun to overturn this negative view of Rome's longest-reigning emperor. In 1994, Jill Harries argued that these negative perceptions are essentially a result of a distinct lack of direct evidence on Theodosius' reign.²⁸ Harries instead argued that, despite not explicitly writing about Theodosius, the church historians of his time, Socrates and Sozomen, together with the evidence for a rather flourishing imperial bureaucracy in the Theodosian Code, give the lie to outdated theories of Theodosius as a rather pathetic emperor uninterested in the realities of government. Harries concludes: 'personally pious but ruthless to opponents and dynastically secure, Theodosius II – or the men behind him – were as much concerned with the realities of power as ever Constantine had been'.²⁹ When one rereads the (limited) sources for Theodosius in a 'Harries-ian' way, one's opinion of Theodosius does indeed begin to shift. The image of Theodosius and his court as presented in material like the Theodosian Code does make it considerably easier to believe in Harries's 'active' Theodosius, deliberately overseeing an eastern re-assertion of *Romanitas*, and asserting the continued rhetorical unity of the empire.

The most obvious medium through which Theodosius did this is the Theodosian Code. In 429, Theodosius decided to bring all the official constitutions issued since Constantine into a single collection.³⁰ According to Theodosius' first *Novel*, the fundamental aim of the Code was to shine a light on the somewhat complex laws of the late Roman state.³¹ The Code derived its authority from the fact that it was designed to supersede all other sources of legal information. Aware that laws being issued in one part of the divided empire but not another could lead to confusion between the two empires, Theodosius ruled that in future no laws issued by the western government could be cited as valid, unless the eastern government was also informed, and vice versa.³² The obvious assumption of this ruling is that there is still a single, functioning 'Roman Empire' to which to apply it – there would seem to be little point in imposing uniformity on laws in this manner in what had become *de facto* two

28 Jill Harries, "Pius princeps: Theodosius II and fifth-century Constantinople," in *New Constantines*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 35–44.

29 Ibid p. 44.

30 *CTh.* 1.1.5; Detlef Liebs, "Roman Law," in *CAH XIV* (2000), 238–59, at p. 244; Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 59ff; John Matthews, *Laying Down the Law* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 1ff.

31 *NTh.* 1.

32 Ibid; Harries, *Law*, p. 61.

separate states.³³ Although this does not seem to have happened in practice,³⁴ the initial conception of the Theodosian Code does bear all the hallmarks of an active assertion of the continuing unity of the empire by the eastern court, under the leadership of the current *princeps*, Theodosius. 'Dirigiste, prescriptive and as insistent on orthodoxy as a Christian bishop would be in theology, Theodosius represented an intellectual authoritarianism in law'.³⁵ Leaving aside matters of practical application, therefore, the initial idea of the Theodosian Code, with its universal applicability across the entirety of what had once been the single Roman Empire, provides a clear picture of the ideological underpinnings of Theodosius and his court – it is essentially an attempt to project an image of the continuing unity of the entire empire onto rather different realities.

If the initial conception of the Theodosian Code can be taken as evidence for an ideological assertion of the continuing unity of the empire by Theodosius and his court, the manner of its publication and dissemination is even more so.³⁶ The Code was launched in Constantinople in October 437.³⁷ This was not an accidental date – days before, Constantinople had witnessed the marriage of the western emperor, Valentinian III, to Theodosius's daughter Licinia Eudoxia.³⁸ In a special ceremony, Theodosius presented the completed Code to the praetorian prefects of the eastern and western empires.³⁹ The western prefect, Anicius Acilius Glabrio Faustus, was to present it to the senate in Rome as something of a *fait accompli* – there does not seem to have been any expectation of a senatorial debate over the Theodosian Code.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it appears that Faustus and his colleague Volusianus were entirely unaware of the existence of the Code until after the wedding of Valentinian and Eudoxia.⁴¹ The general thrust is clear. At the Code's launch ceremony, the senior Augustus, Theodosius, presented the (previously unknown) creation of his imperial court to his junior, the western emperor Valentinian.⁴² This certainly fits with a more or less orchestrated attempt by Theodosius and his court to reassert the

33 Harries, *Law*, p. 61.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid p. 64.

36 See also the thoughts of Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 128ff.

37 *NTh*. 1.

38 Harries, *Law*, p. 64.

39 *Gesta Senatus* 3.

40 Ibid.

41 Matthews, *Laying*, p. 6.

42 According to Socrates (*HE* 7.44), the wedding was originally intended to be in Thessalonica, but was moved to Constantinople 'to avoid inconveniencing Theodosius'.

continuing unity and vitality of the empire, and a sense of *Romanitas*, over the entirety of the Roman world.⁴³

The wedding of Valentinian and Eudoxia highlights a further area in which the eastern court made this reassertion of *Romanitas* obvious. Valentinian had not gained power for himself in coming to the throne in 425. Indeed, until 424 he had lived in Constantinople. In 424, at the age of four, Theodosius sent him to the west with a large imperial army to defeat the usurper John.⁴⁴ Once this had been done, the east continued to interfere in western affairs for quite a while – for example, eastern officials were involved in western government, and eastern armies were sent to the western province of Africa to fight the Vandals.⁴⁵ This eastern interference in western affairs culminated in the marriage of Valentinian and Eudoxia in 437. The underlying impression given by these events is of some sort of ‘domination’ by the east – Valentinian seems to have been fairly powerless in the face of the wishes of his senior colleague Theodosius. This state of affairs is quite reminiscent of the tetrarchy – the idea of having a senior Augustus in one capital, and a junior Caesar in another, would have been extremely familiar to the Romans, and the surviving evidence does seem to imply that the early 5th century witnessed a form of ‘diarchy’, the junior emperor, Valentinian, ruling the west, while being (theoretically) supervised by the senior Augustus, Theodosius, in the east.

This idea of eastern seniority is reinforced by the Code’s introduction into the western empire. On 25 December 438, Faustus, having received the Code from Theodosius over a year earlier, presented it to the Roman senate. At this meeting, Faustus told the Senate:

Last year when I attended, as a mark of devotion, the most felicitous union of all the sacred ceremonies, after the nuptials had been felicitously solemnized, the most sacred Emperor, Our Lord Theodosius, desired to add the following high honour also to His world, namely, that He should order to be established the regulations that must be observed throughout the world, in accordance with the precepts of the laws which had been gathered together in a compendium of 16 books, and these books he had desired to be consecrated by His most sacred name. The immortal

43 Harries, *Law*, p. 64.

44 Olympiodorus, fr. 46; Philostratus 12.13; Socrates, *HE* 7.23; Prosper, *Chronicle* s.a. 423 and 424; Hydatius 84 s.a. 425.

45 Meaghan McEvoy, “Rome and the transformation of the imperial office in the late fourth – mid-fifth centuries AD,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 78 (2010), 151–92, at p. 175.

Emperor, Our Lord Valentinian, with the loyalty of a colleague and the affection of a son, approved this undertaking.⁴⁶

Note the somewhat submissive manner in which Valentinian received the Code. After this speech, the Senate proceeded to erupt into a series of acclamations of the Code,⁴⁷ ‘The main body of acclamations, 43 in number, repeated between eight and 28 times, for a total of 748 separate utterances, follows Faustus’ reading to the Senate of the law’.⁴⁸ This gives a further powerful sense of the ideological discourse of authority engaged in by the Theodosian regime in Constantinople. Although Harries’ contention that ‘the proceedings and the record together, by establishing the existence of consent, gave authority, in varying degrees, to what was done’ is true,⁴⁹ the Senate’s apparent willingness simply to accede to the will of the eastern empire is a telling indication of whence power emanated and was thought to emanate in the later Roman Empire. Although the Senate certainly retained symbolic authority as the ancient government of Old Rome, the Roman senators could clearly see that actual power now resided in the New Rome, Constantinople.

It is reasonably clear, then, from our surviving evidence, that there was some attempt in the eastern empire during the reign of Theodosius to assert the continued unity of the Roman Empire, and Theodosius’ claims to leadership and power over it. In general, these assertions of authority were grounded in claims to legal authority – the Theodosian Code is explicitly a legal document, and Theodosius’ position seems to have been basically grounded in the traditions of Roman law.⁵⁰ Even the more ‘cultural’ manifestations of his assertions of authority seem to have served a primarily ‘juridical’ purpose, or at least grounding his power in the context of the history of the Roman Empire – the histories of Socrates and Sozomen, implicitly comparing Theodosius with Constantine, and the history of Olympiodorus, asserting the authority of the eastern empire over the west, all seem to primarily ground themselves in a discourse of authority based on conceptions of the history of the Roman Empire – they seem to seek to fit Theodosius into a scheme of the unfolding history

46 *Acta Senatus* 2; trans. Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, 1952), p. 3.

47 *Ibid.*

48 Matthews, *Laying*, p. 40.

49 *Ibid.*

50 There is certainly room for a projection of ‘charismatic authority’ by Theodosius and his court – see e.g. A.D. Lee, “The eastern empire,” in *CAH* 14 (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 36ff – but these seem to be overshadowed, at least from the western empire’s perspective, by the assertions of legalistic authority discussed above.

of the empire, and Theodosius' power is justified in the context of the long scheme of Roman history. We thus have here an essentially 'collective' assertion of power and authority – Theodosius' claims to power over the Roman Empire were fundamentally grounded in this discourse of authority relating primarily to collective, grouped channels.

4 Leo I – The Bishop of Rome and Petrine Authority

This study's fundamental argument is that the papacy of Leo I can profitably be seen in the context of this eastern 'power grab'. If Theodosius and his court were indeed expanding the authority of the Roman state (symbolic or otherwise) during the early 5th century, and emphasizing the authority of the 'New Rome', one might expect some kind of reaction from the 'Old Rome' in the west against the new upstarts in Constantinople. Although one might at first assume that this reaction would have come from the western emperor (i.e. Valentinian III), this does not seem to be the case. Instead, the best evidence for a reassertion of the authority of the 'Old Rome' in the 5th century comes from the vast corpus of Leo I. Although it is possible that this picture of Leo leading the reaction of 'Old Rome' is simply a result of the contingencies of survival of the evidence, with whatever Valentinian did to contribute not happening to have survived the intervening 1500 years, this seems unlikely. As discussed above, Valentinian was essentially appointed to the western imperial office by Theodosius, and is therefore unlikely to have mounted the kind of sustained defence of Roman primacy seen in Leo's extant works. Furthermore, there is some evidence for Valentinian willingly acquiescing to the east's policies.⁵¹

In the absence of evidence for any other 'strong man' operating in Rome at this time,⁵² it does seem that Leo acted more or less alone in developing his doctrine of Roman primacy. In any case, we have enough evidence to build up a reasonably full picture of Leo's ideological assertions.⁵³ In contrast to Theodosius' eastern discourse of authority, however, this was not fundamentally grounded in a historical conception of Leo's authority being derived from the concepts and categories of Roman 'civilization' and government. Rather, Leo

51 E.g. *NT/h*. 1.2 – Valentinian complying with Theodosius's desire that all western legislation should be sent to him.

52 There were certainly military 'strong men', but they are peripheral to this study's central interest in the ideologies of power.

53 It should be pointed out that an article of this length can only discuss a small proportion of Leo's extant writings. I have taken care, however, not to choose examples which I do not feel can be used as a basis for a general analysis of Leo's thought.

claimed personal authority for himself, outside the bounds of the Roman legal-bureaucratic system, thus operating within the current of a separate, albeit related, discourse of authority from Theodosius. Although Peter was indeed used to justify Leo's personal authority, this was not done in a legalistic sense – rather, Peter seems to have been used as something of a smokescreen to hide Leo's acquisition of his own personal, 'charismatic' authority.

In his surviving sermons, Leo sets out an impressive vision of the pope deriving his authority from Peter. To quote Leo's discussion of the story of Jesus renaming Simon as Peter:⁵⁴

And I say to you, just as my father manifested my divinity to you, thus also I make known your superiority Because you are Peter, that is, since I am the imperishable rock, I the angular rock, so I make everything one, I am the foundation beyond which no one can place anything, in this way you also are the rock, which is made solid by my virtue, so that whatever things are in my personal power, they should be held by you in common with me (ut quae mihi potestate sunt propria, sint tibi mecum participatione communia). He means that, upon this, the temple built on eternal foundations, the excellence of my church will also be built in heaven by this firm faith ... The duty of this authority (ius istius potestatis) was transmitted to the other apostles, and the nature of this decree went to all the other princes of the church ... For it [this authority] is believed to be Peter's alone, and so the other churches declare that they are subject to Peter. Therefore the privilege of Peter remains, to wherever this just ruling is carried. It is neither too severe nor too indulgent, where nothing is bound, nothing is loosed, except that which St Peter both bounded and loosed.⁵⁵

Clearly, the figure of Peter has a role in Leo's thought and rhetoric. The clear instructions of Christ to Peter to found the Church, as well as Leo's rather imaginative *interpretatio* of Romulus and Remus into Peter and Paul (with Peter very clearly in the lead role in establishing the Church in Rome), leaves, at first sight, very little doubt about whence Leo believes his authority as Bishop of Rome emanates. This does not mean, however, that Ullmann's conception of a fundamentally juristic 'Petrine Doctrine' is a fruitful way of seeing Leo.

Although the 'Petrine Doctrine' is certainly an interesting aspect of Leo's thought, 'the fact of the matter is that Peter functions as a forceful tool for the

54 Matthew 16.16–20.

55 Leo, *Sermo* 4.2–3 (29th September 444), PL 54.149f.

promotion of Roman episcopal authority in only four homilies, a tiny percentage of Leo's surviving sermons'.⁵⁶ The one unifying feature of these sermons is that they were all delivered in Rome to other bishops – in other words, the Ullmannite 'Petrine Doctrine', as expressed in Leo's sermons, seems to be a relatively obscure idea performed by consenting adults in private. Furthermore, Leo's explication of the 'Petrine Doctrine' seems to be limited to early on in his pontificate, i.e. when he needs to persuade his brother bishops of his legitimacy the most.⁵⁷ 'As a consequence, the aggressive use of the Petrine topos was not a relevant feature of the normal rhythms of the pontiff's teaching'.⁵⁸ Although Leo clearly did develop an idea of his own authority being ultimately derived from that of Peter, it seems to have been limited to his communications with his bishops, and was obviously not a central component of his teaching, at least in his sermons, as opposed to his surviving letters.⁵⁹ Thus, the key to Leo's reassertion of Roman authority cannot really be found in his setting out of Ullmann's conception of the 'Petrine Doctrine', and we must instead look elsewhere.

Relatively early in his papacy, Leo became involved with a dispute involving Hilary, the Bishop of Arles, in southern Gaul. As Leo understood it,⁶⁰ the basic facts of the matter were that Chelidonius, the bishop of Besançon and metropolitan of the province of Maxima Sequanorum in northern Gaul, had been deposed by Hilary at a local synod, where it had been determined that Chelidonius had married a widow in violation of the canons. To appeal this decision, Chelidonius went to Rome, where he presented his case to Leo. Hilary also went to Rome to try to defend the synod's decision, which Leo eventually overturned.⁶¹ Leo justified this decision using the 'Petrine Doctrine':

But God wished this mysterious sacrament to be the concern of all the apostles, so that he gave principal power to St Peter, head of the apostles, and he wishes his gifts to flow from him as from the head to all the body, so that anyone who should dare to leave Peter's firm foundation must understand that he has no part in the divine mystery. For he wanted anyone

56 George Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 2013), p. 44.

57 *Ibid.* p. 50

58 *Ibid.* p. 44.

59 *Ibid.* p. 50.

60 Leo, *Epistula* 10, PL 54.628ff. See also Ralph Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D.C., 1989), pp. 145ff; Wessel, *Leo*, pp. 57ff.

61 *Ibid.* 10.3.

not received into his indivisible unity to be named what he himself was, when he said: You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.⁶²

Here again, there is no indication of any 'legalistic' inheritance of Peter's powers by Leo. Rather, Leo introduces what has been called the 'Petrine Subject'.⁶³ Leo presents the dispute between himself and Hilary as an argument between the upholders of Peter's authority, which is asserted on an essentially scriptural basis, and people such as Hilary who try to deny this authority.⁶⁴ Ultimately, Leo's claims to authority in the Hilary affair are based on the position of Peter as *princeps apostolorum*, and Leo's own appropriation of this position – that is to say, his position is based not so much on a 'legalistic' conception of papal power and authority as on a 'personal' conception – Christ's authority was entrusted to Peter; Leo, having been spiritually elected in place of Peter, is continuing this authority vested in Peter in his disputes with the western churches. Although this is certainly an exertion of power and authority on Leo's part, it does not seem fundamentally to be based on Theodosian conceptions of legitimacy being based on more or less 'legalistic' notions of the power of the Roman past.

As well as this invocation of Peter in the written evidence, Leo also seems to have emphasized his personal connection with him through the means by which he reinterpreted the 'liturgical topography' of the city of Rome to come to a new focus on sites associated with Peter. Maureen Miller has come up with a theory of 'strategies of visibility' to explain the power of medieval Italian bishops – this usually entailed building churches or episcopal palaces to publicly assert the power of the bishop.⁶⁵ Recently, Michele Salzman has attempted to do the same thing with Leo.⁶⁶ Leo's sermons show him congregating the faithful in St Peter's Basilica regularly and throughout the year (Christians were not yet expected to attend church every Sunday). During the 4th and 5th centuries, however, St Peter's had only been used infrequently for liturgical purposes, at Christmas and on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. In Salzman's words, 'Leo's liturgy should be seen as part of his contestation for space – physically and symbolically – in Rome'.⁶⁷ Leo also encouraged Christians to forego games on

62 Ibid 10.1.

63 Demacopoulos, *Invention*, p.55f.

64 Ibid.

65 Maureen Miller, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, NY, 2000) p. 258.

66 Michele Renee Salzman, "Leo's Liturgical Topography: Contestations for Space in Fifth-Century Rome," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 103 (2013), 208–32.

67 Ibid p. 211.

public holidays and instead participate in communal public worship, most often at St Peter's. Since the 4th century, this had been 'a locus for conspicuous aristocratic munificence – private burial monuments, funerary banquets, and charity'.⁶⁸ So by centralizing papal authority at St Peter's, Leo seems to be 'contesting for control over this space with Rome's aristocracy by visibly asserting his control over its ritual uses'.⁶⁹ In doing so he is heavily emphasizing Peter and his cult. It may also be significant that Leo was the first pope ever to have been buried at St Peter's – this makes the basilica in essence a 'permanent papal residence' and sets a great precedent for the future.⁷⁰ In all, then, Leo's use of Peter was not limited to its more 'rhetorical' uses in his extant letters and sermons – there is evidence, albeit somewhat slight, for him actively deciding to deliver various sermons at St Peter's throughout the year, in contrast to his predecessors who seem to have been happy to limit themselves to Krauthheimer's 'ecclesiastical area' around the Lateran. What this seems to show is that Leo has embraced the immediate city of Rome as well as the wider world – using Peter allowed him to project his authority *urbi et orbi*.

One area where Leo does not seem to have used the 'Petrine Doctrine' is in his dealings with the eastern emperor and court. In his famous *Tome*, written to Theodosius II on the subject of Eutyches, Leo has this to say:

And when our Lord and Saviour himself is questioning his disciples and instructing their faith, he says, 'who do people say I, the son of man, am?' And when they had displayed a variety of other people's opinions, he says, 'Who do you say I am?' – in other words, 'I who am the son of man and whom you behold in the form of a servant and in real flesh: Who do you say that I am?' Whereupon the blessed Peter, inspired by God and making a confession that would benefit all future peoples, says, 'You are Christ, the Son of the living God'. He thoroughly deserved to be declared 'blessed' by the Lord. He derived the stability of both his goodness and his name from the original Rock...⁷¹

Although Peter is certainly mentioned here, conspicuous in its absence is any attempt by Leo to use any sort of 'Petrine Doctrine' to arrogate any power or authority to himself *in loco Petri*. Take also *Letter 114*, in which Leo formally affirms the Council of Chalcedon's condemnation of Eutyches and the

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid p. 212.

70 Ibid p. 221.

71 Leo, *Epistula* 28.5, PL pp. 771ff. (trans. adapted from online – <https://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/incac1.htm> – accessed 2016 May 30).

restoration of Flavian, although also expressing his displeasure at the Council's affirmation of Canon 28, which attempted to raise the See of Constantinople to equal status to those of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria. In this letter, there is no mention of Peter whatsoever, despite it seemingly being an obvious time to reaffirm a 'Roman primacy' vested in Leo through Peter.⁷² This contrasts with the frequent invocations of Peter in Leo's dealings with the western world. Why? Put simply, it would seem that Leo realized the limitations of the potential of his own authority. The eastern empire in the mid-5th century was clearly still functioning entirely adequately (or at least more adequately than the western empire), and Theodosius II seems to have enjoyed a strong position at the centre of the imperial system, not least through employing the discourses of power outlined above. Thus, Leo's reluctance to use any kind of 'Petrine Doctrine' or 'Petrine Subject' in his dealings with the east may well be due to his realization of these 'realities of power' – there was no point in asserting his 'eastern authority', as he knew it could not really work. Leo's reassertion of the Roman primacy, then, was in essence limited to the west, as well as places like Illyricum, which constituted 'battlegrounds' for influence between the western and eastern empires.

As noted above, Ullmann's interpretation of Leo's pontificate has had an enormous influence among other scholars of the late antique/early medieval papacy. For example, according to the highly influential Catholic theologian Hans Küng:

Leo defined the legal position of Peter's successor more precisely with the help of the Roman law of inheritance. The successor might not inherit the personal characteristics and merits of Peter, but he did inherit the official authority and function handed on by Christ, so that even an unworthy pope was a completely legitimate successor and held office as such.⁷³

But this 'mainstream' view does a serious disservice to what is actually evident in Leo's extant writings. Nowhere in the surviving sermons and letters is there really an iteration of the 'Petrine Doctrine' that Ullmann would like there to be, i.e. a fundamentally legalistic, juridical doctrine with its basis in the Roman law of property and inheritance. Rather, both the written evidence and Salzman's recent analysis of 'Leo's liturgical topography' seem to show an emphasis (conscious or otherwise) on the 'symbolic authority' of the Bishop of Rome. Although this authority was indeed based on Peter, Leo does not seem to have believed himself to derive his power through some sort of unbroken chain of

⁷² Leo, *Epistula* 114, PL 54.1027ff.

⁷³ Hans Küng, *The Catholic Church: A Short History* (London, 2001), pp. 63ff.

apostolic inheritance; rather, in the extant sermons he uses Peter as something of a cipher to disguise his own opinions and discourses. Peter is certainly used to try to add legitimacy to Leo's decisions and opinions, but nowhere is there any indication that Leo believes he has 'inherited' his power, position, or authority from Peter.

5 Conclusion

The fundamental problem with many previous studies of the late antique papacy is their myopic obsession with Rome and the West, to the absolute exclusion of ongoing developments in Constantinople and the eastern empire. This is absolutely the wrong way of reconstructing late antique papal history. This study has attempted to demonstrate that, when one factors in the 5th century Theodosian renaissance in Constantinople, Leo's papacy begins to make far more sense, and indeed becomes significantly more interesting. Rather than a pope more or less randomly proclaiming his inheritance from St Peter to anyone who will listen, when one listens to these eastern voices, the interplays and interactions between the eastern and western empires add significant amounts of colour to our picture of Leo. The clear ideological manifestations of the rhetorical unity of the eastern and western empires, under the leadership of the New Rome in the east rather than the Old Rome in the west, derived ultimately from a conception of legitimacy grounded in appealing to Rome's glorious past, through both its legal system and the comparison of its *princeps* to favourable examples from the past, together with the very loud and clear broadcasting of these strategies of legitimation to Valentinian III and the western empire, must surely have had some impact on Leo's aims during his pontificate. The 'Roman revolution' of the title refers to this – the decline of imperial control in the west led both the eastern and western authorities to try to assert their power and authority over the western empire. Although they were both aiming for roughly the same thing, i.e. *auctoritas* over the shell of what was left of the *imperium Romanum*, they operated within different spheres. Theodosius and the eastern court, notwithstanding the various aspects of 'charismatic' authority engaged in in the city of Constantinople itself,⁷⁴ grounded their claims to power over the western empire in a conception of Roman law and the juridical nature of the Roman ideal. Leo, however, operated outside this discourse, in a more personal, charismatic, sphere, which emphasized spiritual capital, not derived from Roman law.

74 For which see e.g. Kenneth Holm, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 1ff.

The Reinvention of the Soldier-Emperor under Heraclius

Theresia Raum

1 Introduction

In 611, the Sasanian Persians continued their longstanding attack on the Eastern Roman Empire and led an army into Asia Minor. Under the command of General Shahin, they captured the city of Caesarea, the most important military base in Cappadocia. They managed to occupy the city for several months until they were surrounded by the Roman troops of general Priscus, the commander of the expeditionary forces in Asia Minor. The besiegers were now besieged and soon found themselves in a predicament as they suffered from a lack of food and fodder. In the summer of 612, the Persians managed to escape the encirclement. The Romans, briefly confident of victory, were outwitted and beaten.¹ The events in Caesarea resulted in great frustration among the Roman population; in particular, the Emperor Heraclius, who had recently gained the throne, must have felt resentment towards Priscus and blamed him for the failure. The Emperor's resentment towards the general, however, may have had a personal dimension. According to the Chronicler Nikephoros, earlier in 612, he had left Constantinople and joined Priscus in Caesarea to discuss the military situation in person. Priscus had then showed more than simple reluctance. He first pretended to be ill, and even upon receiving Heraclius, he said directly to the latter's face that an emperor should not go to war, but stay in his palace and delegate military matters to his staff.²

This anecdote is reported by Nikephoros' short history written at the end of the 8th century. Although it might be an anachronism, there is no reason to distrust Nikephoros. According to Cyril Mango, the chronicler was here relying,

1 Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, text, translation, and commentary by Cyril Mango (Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), Ch. 2; Theophanis *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, vol. 1. (Leipzig, 1883), a.m. 6103, p. 299; *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, trans. with notes by R.W. Thomson, comm. by James Howard-Johnston, with Tim Greenwood (Liverpool, 1999), Ch. 34, p. 66.

2 “ὁ δὲ οἷα ἐπιτωθάζων οὐκ ἐξὸν βασιλεῖ ἔφασκε καταλιμπάνειν βασιλεία καὶ ταῖς πόρρω ἐπιχωριάζειν δυνάμειν” (Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 2).

in his turn, on a mid-7th-century Constantinopolitan chronicle, whose author is likely to have had the anecdote first-hand.³ Now, this is a tale of sheer audacity! Priscus dared to criticize the emperor and managed to have him return to Constantinople, without having achieved anything – a humiliation in front of both the army and the urban elites, which may have seriously damaged Heraclius' authority had he not resolved to dismiss Priscus shortly after.⁴ Yet, it is clear that the general's accusations did little more than echo the common opinion of his time.

For centuries no Roman emperor had left the capital city of Constantinople to campaign in person, the last being Theodosius I at the end of the 4th century.⁵ To be more precise, Emperor Maurice had tried to break with this tradition and personally led a campaign around 590, which he, however, abandoned before any contact with the enemy due to strong adversities.⁶ Heraclius' break with tradition and personal engagement in battle in his campaigns against Persia is regularly commented upon in modern manuals and scholarly assessments of that emperor's military achievements.⁷ His decision to leave the capital for military purposes, however, offers more than a glimpse of his personality, but had wide-ranging implications for Eastern Roman emperors. In fact, it ended a system of capital-based rulership, which had bound emperors, since Arcadius, to influential stakeholders in Constantinople.⁸ At the same time, it reintroduced a practice that had been common for emperors in the 3rd century and was continued again by Heraclius' successors. Being thus regarded as a turning point at the end of Late Antiquity, Heraclius' reinvention of the soldier-emperor should receive a more comprehensive explanation

3 Nikephoros, *Short History*, pp. 12–5.

4 Priscus was tonsured and confined in the monastery of the Chora, where he soon died. See Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 2; *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1832), p. 703.

5 See Mischa Meier, "Der christliche Kaiser zieht (nicht) in den Krieg. 'Religionskriege' in der Spätantike?" in *Krieg und Christentum: Religiöse Gewalttheorien in der Kriegserfahrung des Westens*, ed. A. Holzem (Paderborn, 2009), pp. 254–78; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA, 1997), p. 289.

6 For an detailed account of that campaign see Theophylacti Simocattae *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1887), v 16, 1–VI 3,8.

7 See Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 68; James Howard-Johnston, "Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the Eastern Roman Empire, 622–630," in *War in History* 6 (1999), pp. 1–44; Wolfram Brandes, "Herakleios und das Ende der Antike im Osten: Triumphe und Niederlagen," in *Sie schufen Europa: Historische Portraits von Konstantin bis Karl dem Großen*, ed. Mischa Meier (Munich, 2007), pp. 248–58.

8 Rene Pfeilschifter, *Der Kaiser und Konstantinopel: Kommunikation und Konfliktaustrag in einer spätantiken Metropole*, Millennium-Studien 44 (Berlin, 2013), pp. 18–24.

with respect to the larger process of transformation in the 7th century and with special regard to its sociological meaning.

2 The Eastern Roman Empire under Threat

At the beginning of the 7th century, the situation of the Eastern Roman Empire was alarming. Since the middle of the 6th century, it had been permanently under external and internal threats. It had lost large territories to the advancing Lombards in the Italian peninsula, not to mention the losses in the west to the Franks and Visigoths. In the Balkan region, the Avars and the Slavs exerted massive pressure on the northern border. The Danube no longer served as a frontier, but was constantly overrun. They invaded Illyria and Thrace and attacked many cities such as Sirmium, Salona, and even Thessalonike. Seemingly without any resistance (for there is no mention of any Roman counter-attack), the Avars and the Slavs pushed forward into the Constantinopolitan hinterland, raiding and devastating the countryside.⁹ At an alleged negotiation meeting outside the long walls in June 623, the Avar Khagan nearly managed to capture the Roman Emperor. Heraclius luckily escaped with his crown under his arm, but the loss of face was immense.¹⁰ A few years later, the situation of the empire had deteriorated even more. In 626, while Heraclius was already on campaign in the East, the Avars and the Slavs besieged Constantinople itself. This situation was dire and without precedent in Roman history, since it was the first time that the capital had been beleaguered by an enemy with heavy siege engines while the Constantinopolitans were left on their own. Most imperial troops sent by Heraclius to relieve the city arrived only afterwards. Although the siege ended in the defeat of the attacking forces, this traumatic

9 See Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.* (Munich, 1988), pp. 237–87; Andrew Louth, “Byzantium Transforming (600–700),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 221–48.

10 Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 10; Theophanes, *Chronographia* a.m. 6110, pp. 301–302; *Chronicon Paschale*, pp. 712–713. Michael and Mary Whitby suggest in their notes on this passage that the meeting point outside the city walls was chosen because it would have been too dangerous to admit the khagan into Constantinople. But the opposite seems to be more probable: it would have been safer for the emperor to receive an Avar delegation inside the walls as it was usual for centuries. The weakened emperor was not in the position to make demands; he came as a mere supplicant to the khagan. See *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 165 n. 451.

experience shook the foundations of the Eastern Roman Empire to an extent only comparable to the defeat at Cannae or the sack of Rome in 410.¹¹

Looking at the East, the situation was worse, too. For centuries, the conflict with the Sasanian Persians had been a flashpoint that flared up time and again. After a short interruption during the reign of the emperor Maurice, war newly erupted as Phokas seized the Roman throne in 602. The Persian King Chosroes II used the bloody usurpation and the murder of Maurice as a pretext to avenge the former emperor and attack the Eastern Roman Empire. Since then, the Persians continually gained territories and even came as far as Chalcedon. In 615, they had reached the other side of the Bosphorus, and General Shahin, who previously had outmanoeuvred the Romans at Caesarea, positioned his army within sight of Constantinople. As with the Avars, Heraclius tried to negotiate peace with the Persians, but the course of negotiations was similarly disastrous. The Roman ambassadors were caught and rotted in prison.¹² Chosroes II was at the peak of his power, and he had no interest in making peace with an empire that seemed to be running on empty. In the following years, the Persians continued their conquests and large parts of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt came under their rule. Already in 614, the holy city of Jerusalem had fallen, and five years later Alexandria was occupied. While the loss of Alexandria and Egypt caused practical problems for the capital's corn supply, the fall of Jerusalem had a religious dimension. It was not only one of the most important cities for Christianity, but had inherited precious relics, such as the relic of the True Cross, which also fell into Persian hands.¹³ Thus, the Persians were not just threatening the physical existence of the Eastern Roman Empire,

11 The siege of Constantinople is described in many sources. The most impressive are the homily commonly attributed to Theodore the Syncellus, *Homilia de obsidione Avarica Constantinopolis*, ed. L. Sternbach, "Analecta Avarica," in *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626*, *Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica* 19, ed. F. Makk (Szeged, 1975), and the *Bellum Avaricum* of George of Pisidia, ed., Italian trans. and comm. by A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia Poemi, I: panegirici epici*, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7 (Ettal, 1959). See also James Howard-Johnston, "The siege of Constantinople in 626," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641). Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. Gerrit Reinink and Bernard Stolte (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, 2002), pp. 131–42.

12 Theophanes, *Chronographia* a.m. 6102, p. 299; a.m. 6109, p. 301; *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 706; *Sebeos*, Ch. 38, pp. 78–80.

13 The disaster of the capture of Jerusalem is unexpectedly intensely described in the otherwise prosaic *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 704: "In this year in about the month June, we suffered a calamity which deserves unceasing lamentations. For, together with many cities of the east, Jerusalem too was captured by the Persians, and in it were slain many thousands of clerics, monks, and virgin nuns. The Lord's tomb was burnt and the far-famed temples of God, and, in short, all the precious things were destroyed. The venerated wood of the

but its ideational order, that is to say, its Christian foundations. Consequently, Christian faith became a key part in the Roman fight for survival.¹⁴

In addition to the threats from the outside, internal strife had a threatening impact on Roman society. Two violent usurpations within less than ten years had caused great uncertainty. Only a few years before the revolt of Phocas, the church historian Evagrius could still proudly point to the fact that there had been no successful usurpation since the time of Constantine and attributed it to the Christianisation of the empire. Now this old order had abruptly come to an end.¹⁵

Plague and natural disasters had also shaken the empire from within. The contemporary *Chronicon Paschale* records an earthquake under Heraclius' reign on 20 April 611.¹⁶ There even exists some new dendrochronological evidence of a little Ice Age between 536 and 660.¹⁷ The declined crop yield resulted in a shortage of food supply, which was exacerbated by the aforementioned loss of the fertile Egyptian regions. The public grain supply in Constantinople was reduced and the Roman population began to suffer from famine.¹⁸ Moreover, the plague occurred in the Eastern Roman Empire, to which many people, weakened by starvation, fell victim. These environmental factors reinforced demographic decline and scarcity of resources. In retrospect, Nikephoros sums up all these factors as reasons for Heraclius' departure to the East as

Cross, together with the holy vessels that were beyond enumeration, was taken by the Persians, and the Patriarch Zacharias also became a prisoner." (trans. Whitby, p. 156)

- 14 Later during Heraclius' campaign, the religious connotation of the Persian War was strongly emphasized by himself through promising the soldiers heavenly reward for death in battle, but also by the patriarch and contemporary writers through imploring divine support. It is not without reason that scholars trace back the origins of the concept of holy war to this time. See Yuri Stoyanov, "Apocalypticizing Warfare," in *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition*, eds. K. Bardakjian and S. La Porta (Leiden, 2014), pp. 379–433.
- 15 Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, eds. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia* (London, 1898), 3,41. See Mischa Meier, "Kaiser Phokas (602–610) als Erinnerungsproblem," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107 (2014), 139–74.
- 16 *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 702. The earthquake is also recorded in the *Chronicle* of Seert, ed. and trans. A. Scher, *Histoire nestorienne (chronique de Se'ert)*, PO IV. 3, v. 2, XIII. 4 (Paris, 1908–19), LXXXII (p. 207f).
- 17 See Ulf Büntgen et al., "Cooling and societal change during the Late Antique Little Ice Age from 536 to around 660 AD," *Nature Geoscience* 9 (2016), 231–6. The account of the sources fits well into this finding as there are many records of harsh winters with extreme cold and frozen seas: *The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo*, trans. Matti Moosa (Teaneck, NJ, 2014), X 25, p. 432, for the years 606/07 und 610/11; Theophanes, *Chronographia* a.m. 6101, p. 297, for the year 608.
- 18 The public grain supply in Constantinople was first charged and then totally suspended in August 618, see *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 711.

follows: “Finding himself troubled by both the Persians and the Avars, and the Roman State hard pressed by famine and decimated by plague, Herakleios (...) attempted to invade Persia.”¹⁹

3 Threatened Order in Social Theory

The Eastern Roman Empire as described above may be regarded, in sociological terms, as a society under stress.²⁰ According to concepts of social theory, stress means that the various incidents that I have pointed to threaten the order of a society as a whole. That leads to a situation in which agents become convinced that their options for action are uncertain; in which behaviour and routines are called into question; in which agents feel they cannot rely on each other; and in which agents manage to establish a threat discourse in order to frame difficulties. This discourse is highly emotional, superimposes other topics, and argues with the factor of time. An established threat discourse opens up new perspectives, prepares the ground for new ideas and new agents, and provides a possibility for change. The process of change can be considered as reordering, whereby social orders can either return to their previous form (if this is at all possible), modify it in some aspects, or radically transform into a new order. Usually those moments of radical change are regarded as turning points in history and characterize our perception of epochs. Looking at societies under stress means to question those demarcations between time periods and aims to better understand transformation processes of societies.²¹

19 “ὁ οὖν Ἡράκλειος ἔκ τε Περσῶν καὶ Ἀβάρων θορυβούμενος ἅμα καὶ λιμῶ πιεζομένης τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς πολιτείας καὶ λοιμικῶ θανάτῳ φθειρομένης, (...) ἐπειράτο (...) εἰς τὴν Περσικὴν εἰσβαλεῖν” (Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 12).

20 In 2011, a Collaborative Research Centre funded by the German Research Foundation was founded at the University of Tuebingen, which focuses on such societies under stress. In several projects, researchers from different fields of science and of different time periods examine how societies react to threat and how coping strategies influence their social order. The following concept of “threatened order – societies under stress” is mainly based on the research of this Collaborative Research Centre.

21 See for the following Ewald Frie and Mischa Meier, “Bedrohte Ordnungen: Gesellschaften unter Stress im Vergleich,” in *Aufbruch – Katastrophe – Konkurrenz – Zerfall: Bedrohte Ordnungen als Thema der Kulturwissenschaften*, eds. Ewald Frie and Mischa Meier (Tuebingen, 2015), pp. 1–27. In his latest book John Haldon examines “the Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740.” While there are certain similarities concerning methodological and conceptual considerations, Haldon focuses primarily on resilience and adaptability, which suggests the survival of the old system, whereas the reordering model is principally open for any outcome of transformation processes and focuses on rather short

Reordering processes of societies under stress can be described as interactions between crisis diagnosis and crisis management. Crisis diagnosis develops from the above-mentioned threat discourse. It clearly names who is threatened, from whom the threat originates, and what will be the expected fate if the threat could not be overcome. In other words, it contains a statement about the status quo and an expectation about the near future. It evolves from the public debate as the one interpretation that is believed to be most realistic and gains a majority of followers. After this diagnosis becomes predominant, it is nearly impossible for agents to remain neutral, since that would mean an exclusion from the community. At the same time, crisis diagnosis evokes reactions that seem appropriate to cope with the perceived threat.²² Those reactions are part of the crisis management, and their success or failure in turn affects crisis diagnosis. This dynamic between diagnosis and reaction is influenced by two other processes: the mobilization of people and means that are necessary to respond to the threat, and the reflexion on the self-perception of the involved agents. The latter is initiated by the threat discourse as well. In public debate, not only are concrete threats discussed, but the structure and order that they threaten. This reflexion on order influences the self-perception of its members. Quite paradoxically, it is because those members talk about their threatened order that the structure of a society is best observed under stress. At any rate, the four components of diagnosis, reaction, mobilization, and reflexion and their mutual interaction consequently lead to modifications of society. This reordering process is a reaction to an existential threat, which starts with the establishment of a threat discourse and has an open, unforeseen, end.

According to the above concept of threatened orders, the only way to establish successful crisis management is by mobilizing sufficient human, financial, and ideological resources. Mobilization means to create support and provide resources in order to overcome a given threat. Within a short time, enough people need to be encouraged to participate in the joint struggle. At the same time, sufficient resources need to be available, since engaged people should be

time periods of rapid social change. See John Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 1–25.

22 It needs to be stressed that the reordering model focuses on the perception of contemporaries. Therefore it is important to note that it is the subjective interpretation of the threat which leads to a certain way of reaction and that this interpretation does not necessarily comply with our modern view. Thus, for example, an earthquake, which nowadays would be attributed to plate tectonics, could be interpreted as punishment from God, whereby penance would seem to be the appropriate measure to appease God. See Haldon, *The Empire*, p. 14, who develops similar ideas.

able to trust that they will be applied at the right moment, with appropriate resources, and at the right location. It is assumed that mobilization of people can be achieved through three different means: by convincing, rewarding, or compelling them. To start with the last one, mobilization through compulsion means the threat or use of violence in order to force somebody to do something. Mobilization through reward is based on material recompense, like money or other goods, and targets extrinsic motivation.²³ The third method, mobilization by persuasion, is the supreme discipline, because it requires that people be wholeheartedly convinced that they are doing the right things for the right reasons. By contrast, the mobilization or activation of resources works differently, and availability of resources may influence positively the availability of people: more people will join a cause if there is plenty of money to support it, and causes with large groups of supporters will attract more money.

Research on social movements and collective action reveals complex dependencies between the character of the group that needs to be mobilized, and the course and success of crisis management. According to Mancur Olson, mobilization is more difficult the greater and the more heterogeneous a group is. The so-called free rider paradox describes the effect that although the contribution of one single member to a collective action gets smaller, as more people contribute, possible contributors will not get involved and will behave according to the motto "let the others bear the costs."²⁴ Secondly, the groups' social structure plays a crucial role. In particular, the ties and connections between and within the micro-level of one singular agent and the macro-level of society both affect mobilization. Those ties can be either horizontal, when they connect members of a social group, such as family, relatives, or religion, citizenship, etc., or vertical, when agents are connected through authority, power, and hierarchy. Those connections have a deep impact on every single group member and create a cohesive community. Due to group affiliation, members will feel affected by the community concerning threats and will be more inclined to support crisis management.²⁵

23 It is because of this definition for rewards as material goods that spiritual rewards, as they were promised to the soldiers by Heraclius for death in battle, do not belong to this category.

24 See Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA, 1965), p. 2f; Anthony Oberschall, *Social Movements – Ideologies, Interests, and Identities* (New Brunswick, 1993), p. 20.

25 See James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), pp. 1–23; Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood Cliffs, NY, 1973), p. 119.

4 Heraclius as Soldier-Emperor

All theory is grey. But do concepts borrowed from social studies provide any noteworthy insight into the developments of the beginning of the 7th century? I will concentrate on the years between 610 and 630. In this rather short time period, the existence of a threat discourse as described above is difficult to trace due to the lack of sources and the perspective of the extant material, but nevertheless discernible in the works of George of Pisidia. He was not only a contemporary but also the court poet of Heraclius; he both reflected upon, and helped to shape, the public image of the emperor and thus should be regarded as a primary source for communicative processes during Heraclius' reign.²⁶ In his first poem *On the return of Heraclius*, written according to scholarly consensus as early as 611,²⁷ George addresses the emperor as follows: "You act like this and overcome time, when events, like streams, flood the earth with such serious struggles. But there is hope that you completely make an end to our concerns about the present difficulties."²⁸ These apparently unspectacular lines, certainly a propagandistic piece of poetry, show nonetheless the awareness of the present threats, and stress, more importantly, the time factor while raising expectations of overcoming crisis. George continues to describe those present difficulties as a storm that caused the fall of the community (καταγίδια [...], | δι' ἧς τὸ κοινὸν εἰς ὄλεθρον ἤρχετο; v. 54-55), or as stream of evil (τὸ ῥεῦμα τῶν κακῶν; v. 62),

26 See James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford, 2010), p. 30. On the following pages (pp. 32-4), Howard-Johnston identifies a rift between emperor and poet. But his argument, ultimately based on the formulation "λάβοι κατ' ἐχθρῶν διττὰ νικητήρια, | στήσοι τρόπαια καὶ παθῶν καὶ βαρβάρων" (Exp. Pers. 3.409-410), is thin. Howard-Johnston argues that πάθη alludes to Heraclius' personal sin of passion and that George criticizes the emperor for his incestuous marriage with his niece Martina. Nonetheless πάθη must not necessarily be interpreted as passion, but allows various readings. In this context it is, in my view, more likely that George simply speaks of πάθη as suffering due to war and other threats. Moreover, Heraclius is positively presented throughout the work of George, even in the poems, which do not seem to be commissioned by him and are dated to the time of the alleged rift. See, for example, the two poems, written in 626, where Heraclius is addressed as κοσμορύστης (In Bon. Pat. 7) and where his solicitude is praised: "οὐ μὴν παρείδεν ἡ τομωτάτη φύσις | ἀπὼν παρῆναι τοῖς πόνοις ὁ δεσπότης, | ἀλλ' εἰς τοσοῦτον ἐγγυς ἦν τῶν φροντίδων | ὅσον μεταξύ τῶν τόπων ἀφίστατο" (Bell. Avar. 246-249).

27 For the dates of the poems I would generally follow Mary Whitby, "Defender of the Cross: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius and his Deputies," in *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. Mary Whitby (Leiden, 1998), pp. 247-73.

28 "πράττεις δὲ ταῦτα καὶ βιάζῃ τὸν χρόνον, | ὅταν τοσαύταις συμπλοκαῖς τὰ πράγματα | τὴν γῆν ἐπικλύζωσι ῥευμάτων δίκην. | ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἐλπίς τῶν παρόντων δυσκόλων | ἐκ σοῦ πεπαῦσθαι πανταχοῦ τὰς φροντίδας" (Heracl. ex Afr. red. 30-34).

and it is striking that he seems to prefer forces of nature for comparison. The Romans are defencelessly exposed to the threats like to the elements. Furthermore, he names the concrete origin of those threats: the barbarians (Μήδοι [...] καὶ βάρβαροι; v. 21) and the tyrant, meaning Heraclius' predecessor Phokas (τὰ πικρὰ τοῦ τυράννου τραύματα; v. 40; τῆς τυραννικῆς βλάβης; v. 59). George also creates a sense of unity by emphasizing the shared sufferings of the community (τὸ κοινὸν; v. 17, 35, 37, 55; ἡμᾶς ἠθλιωμένους; v. 39). However, those are indications rather than strong evidence of a beginning threat discourse, and it must be taken into account that *On the return of Heraclius* was written in the first year of Heraclius' reign. But, as shown, it already contains several characteristics of a threat discourse by giving answers to the aforementioned questions of origin and objective of the threat and to the expectation about the near future. The impression is that it was a turbulent time and people felt insecure. In his poem, George addresses the Constantinopolitans and their fears. He offers them a scapegoat for their dire situation, evokes images of the enemy and simultaneously presents Heraclius as a new identification figure. This program was continued and expanded in his further writings, which reached a peak of production especially in the years of Heraclius' absence. Since we know that his poems were for public lecture, the intended audience seems to have been not so much the emperor but indeed the people in the capital and the educated elite of the empire. His poems might thus have had a certain impact on discourses in Constantinople.

Regarding crisis management, mobilization was already in progress some years after Heraclius' accession. Financial resources were obtained by melting down the bronze statue of the Forum Boarium for coinage.²⁹ Secondly, Theophanes the Confessor, who wrote in the early 9th century and largely depended on earlier sources, speaks further of a deal between the emperor and Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople. He says: "Being short of funds he (i.e. Heraclius) took on loan the moneys of religious establishments and he also took the candelabra and other vessels of the holy ministry from the Great Church, which he minted into a great quantity of gold and silver coin."³⁰ Thirdly, a new

29 *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai*, eds. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (Leiden, 1984), 42: ὑπὸ Ἡρακλείου χωνευθῆναι τὸν βούν εἰς σκουλακαταμίειν καὶ εἰς τὸν Πόντον περάσαι ἕνεκεν στρατολογίας (ἦν δὲ τὸ σκουλακτόν ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ).

30 "λαβὼν δὲ τὰ τῶν εὐαγῶν οἴκων χρήματα ἐν δανείῳ, ἀπορία κατεχόμενος ἔλαβε καὶ τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας πολυκάνδηλά τε καὶ ἕτερα σκεύη ὑπουργικά, χαράξας νομίματα τε καὶ μιλιάρισια πάμπολλα" (Theophanes, *Chronographia* a.m. 613, pp. 302–3; Theophanes, *Chronicle*, trans. and comm. by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with Geoffrey Greatrex [Oxford, 1997], p. 435); Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 11. The patriarchs concern for and assistance in financial matters is also underlined by the novels initiated by Sergius and promulgated by Heraclius that deal with the costs and numbers of the church personnel.

silver coin, called the hexagram, was introduced in 615. The *Chronicon Paschale* states that the hexagram was made by law, “and imperial payments were made with it and at half their old rate.”³¹ Besides the aspect of savings in public costs, the introduction of the hexagram is interesting due to another reason: the reverse of the small silver coin bears the words “DEUS ADIUTA ROMANIS” (“May God help the Romans”). This much-quoted inscription was probably not only an urgent call for divine help (which in itself would be extraordinary for a coin circumscription), but an allusion to the contemporary battle cry. The *Strategikon of Maurice* reports that the soldiers answer the generals’ “adiuta” with a “deus” and then rush into battle.³² Thus, the coin was an appeal for everybody who held it in his hands to get ready for war.

In addition to the mobilization of resources, the mobilization or motivation of the Roman population was also under way. It is perhaps because power in the Eastern Roman Empire was largely based on public acceptance that Heraclius did not seem to have forced his own people to comply with his military and civil demands by threat or the use of violence.³³ Material rewards were also no possibility since the Eastern Roman Empire suffered from lack of financial resources, as I have just mentioned. According to the sociological model of threatened orders, there is only one option for mobilization left, which consists of convincing people to engage in the collective struggle in order to overcome crisis. This appears to be exactly what took place under Heraclius.

Indeed, we can discern several strategies used, and it is remarkable that they were not only implemented by the emperor but also by the patriarch and other high-ranking men. Thus, for example, the joint rhetorical efforts of patriarch Sergius and the magister officiorum Bonus persuaded the citizens of Constantinople not to yield to the Avars and the Slavs during the siege of 626. That

31 “Τούτω τῷ ἔτει γέγονεν ἀπὸ νόμου νόμισμα ἑξάγραμμον ἀργυροῦν, καὶ βασιλικαὶ ῥόγαι δι’ αὐτοῦ γεγονάσι καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἥμισυ τῆς ἀρχαιότητος” (*Chronicon Paschale*, p. 706; trans. Whitby, p. 158).

32 DOC 64; *Mauricii Strategicon*, ed. George T. Dennis (Vienna, 1981), XII B 16, p. 442; Lutz Greisiger, *Messias, Endkaiser, Antichrist: Politische Apokalyptik unter Juden und Christen des Nahen Ostens am Vorabend der arabischen Eroberung*, Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 21 (Wiesbaden, 2014), p. 79.

33 On the importance of acceptance in the political system of the Eastern Roman Empire see Pfeilschifter, *Der Kaiser und Konstantinopel*. Heraclius may have had fewer qualms about the threat or use of violence in other domains, as is the case with the forced baptism of the Jews during his reign. But like the barbarians and Phokas, Jews were scapegoats for the present threat and at the margin of the Roman society. Little wonder then that mobilization of Jews was carried out rather by repressive measures than by rewards or persuasion; see Jan W. Drijvers, “Heraclius and the restitutio crucis: Notes on Symbolism and Ideology,” in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, eds. Gerrit Reinink and Bernard Stolte (Leuven, 2002), pp. 175–90.

the Constantinopolitans stood loyal to emperor and empire while suffering the hardships of the siege is more astonishing, since Heraclius was far away in the East at that time and victory was by no means certain.³⁴ Bonus, however, successfully garrisoned and defended the city walls, employing not only regular soldiers for the task but also sailors who happened to be in Constantinople and ordinary citizens. The *Chronicon Paschale* reports that he gave commendation to those brave men and thus motivated them to engage further in the city's defence.³⁵ Theodore the Syncellus, who probably wrote the famous *Homily on the siege of Constantinople*, clearly the work of an eyewitness, also emphasizes the motivational skills of Bonus. Meanwhile patriarch Sergius provided spiritual assistance. According to Theodore, "our archpriest gathered everyone, if he were a priest or clerk, living as a monk or among the people – of the men of any age, from the child to the old man, and (...), as if he armed them, he harangued them to be brave and not discouraged."³⁶

Back to the starting point – Heraclius himself seems to have adopted similar mobilization strategies in his interaction with the soldiers. According to Nikephoros, right after the degradation and dismissal of Priscus, Heraclius addressed the former's troops as follows: "The Reverend Priscus had you as his assistants until now, but today we make you the emperor's own servants."³⁷ He ordered, additionally, that they should have the first place among the military contingents. The intention, and surely the result, was that the soldiers

34 The memory of the fate that happened to Jerusalem 12 years earlier was still vivid. It was obvious that resisting the besiegers would mean to risk being massacred, especially after the khagan had made an offer to spare the lives of the citizens if they would leave him their property and city. See *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 720.

35 "καὶ οἱ εὐρεθέντες δὲ ναῦται ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐξήλθον εἰς συμμαχίαν τοῖς πολίταις καὶ εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ναυτῶν ἐμχανήσατο καταρτίαν καὶ ἐκρέμασεν εἰς αὐτὴν κάραβον, ὀφείλων δι' αὐτοῦ ἐμπρῆσαι τοὺς πυργοκαστέλλους τῶν ἐχθρῶν, ὄντινα ναύτην καταπλήξαντα τοὺς πολεμίους οὐ μετρίως συνεκρότησε Βόνος ὁ πανεύφημος μάγιστρος" (*Chronicon Paschale*, p. 720). See further the poem *In Bonum patricium* of George of Pisidia.

36 "ἅπαν γὰρ ὅσον ἐν ἱερεῦσι τελεῖ καὶ ὅσον ἐν κλήρω καὶ μονάδι βίω καὶ λαῶ κατατέτακται, πᾶσάν τε ἡλικίαν μέχρι νηπίου καὶ γέροντος ἀθροίζων εἰς ἐν ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ ἡμέτερος θαρῶρεῖν παρήνει καὶ μὴ ἐκλύεσθαι, τούτοις ὀπλιζῶν τοῖς ῥήμασι" (Theodore Syncellus, *Homilia de obsidione Avarica Constantinopolis*, p. 79; trans. Pearse). "The intimate connection of the emperor, patriarch and people", clearly an effect of Sergius' motivational skills, has yet been recognized by Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35.

37 "ὁ παπᾶς Κρίσπος ὑπουργοὺς ὑμᾶς ἕως τοῦ νῦν εἶχεν, ἡμεῖς δὲ σήμερον οἰκειακοὺς τῆς βασιλείας ὑπηρέτας" (Nikephoros, *Short History*, Ch. 2; trans. Mango, p. 41). This episode took place right after the act of tonsure, which explains why Priscus is already called παπᾶς (reverend).

felt honoured and closely connected to the emperor.³⁸ Heraclius acted in the same manner further on with the troops in the East, and by setting a personal example of engagement in warfare created a bond of loyalty between him and the soldiers. In order to achieve this loyalty, Heraclius needed to be present and visible. First of all, it was important to stay in contact with the leading generals and be familiar with current military affairs. This intention may explain why Heraclius went to Cappadocia to meet Priscus and why he only returned to Constantinople when his cousin Niketas had arrived with some troops.³⁹ Especially in the years between 610 and 630, Heraclius was always seeking personal contact with his generals and soldiers, and this might be the reason why he also went off to the Eastern frontier with the army.⁴⁰ Secondly, Heraclius conveyed the image of a soldier-emperor, who fights and dies with his soldiers as one of them. This same image is reflected by several sources, for example in the ardent speeches to the soldiers reported in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes.⁴¹ In one of these speeches, Heraclius exhorted his troops with the following words: “Men, my brethren, let us keep in mind the fear of God and fight to avenge the insult done to God. Let us stand bravely against the enemy who have inflicted many terrible things on the Christians.”⁴² The religious connotation of this

38 Nikephoros’ preference for gossip and his highly rhetorical style might raise serious doubts as to the historical substance of this passage. Nonetheless, he uses solid 7th-century material for his narrative. Thus, while the presentation might be doubted, its historical core, that Heraclius was immediately trying to gain the soldiers’ loyalty, certainly bears some truth. The value of domestic political news in Nikephoros is also underlined by Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, pp. 255f.

39 This point is strongly emphasized by Nikephoros, who reports in his second chapter that a son was born to Heraclius while he stayed in Caesarea. Nikephoros continues that at the same time Niketas, Heraclius’ cousin, arrived at the imperial city and that only for this reason Heraclius returned to Byzantium (“τότε δὴ παραγίνεται καὶ Νικήτας ὁ τὴν ἀξίαν πατρικίως πρὸς τὸ βασιλεῖον ἄστυ. διὰ τοῦτο Ἡράκλειος εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον ἐπάνεισι”). To put it very simply, the birth of a son was not important enough for Heraclius to return to the capital, but the arrival of one of his best generals was.

40 One might argue that seeking personal contact was intended to prevent defection movements and usurpations. But that is just the negative formulation of the same purpose. Heraclius’ fate was inseparably connected to the fate of the state, and therefore the unity of the empire was a primary objective for the survival of both the empire and the emperor.

41 Theophanes is here relying on a fragmented work of George of Pisidia. For the value, see Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, p. 308: “The vestiges of that text transmitted by Theophanes should be highly prized both for the quality of the information purveyed, based as it is on contemporary documents, and for the insight into the mood of the times and official thinking provided by the poetry.”

42 “ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί μου, λάβωμεν εἰς νοῦν τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φόβον καὶ ἀγωνισώμεθα τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ὕβριν ἐκδικήσαι. στῶμεν γενναίως κατ’ ἐχθρῶν τῶν πολλὰ δεινὰ Χριστιανοῖς ἐργασαμένων” (Theophanes, *Chronographia* a.m. 6114, p. 307; trans. Mango/Scott, p. 439).

passage has long been recognized,⁴³ but it also illustrates Heraclius' attitude towards his soldiers. He speaks of them as brothers and by constantly repeating "us" stresses his inclusion with them. The same could be found in George of Pisidia's *Expeditio Persica*, where Heraclius emphasizes that he is inseparably linked to the fate of the empire and, more importantly, to his soldiers as to his brothers.⁴⁴ This attitude had no little effect; the soldiers were impressed by his engagement and highly motivated. One of them exclaims: "Oh what misery! Even our king and emperor arms himself as one of us for fight!" and another one declares: "I have less fear, now that I see the emperor suffering the same hard fate."⁴⁵ In addition to those literary sources there exists numismatic evidence. On some unfortunately rare coins, struck in 630 by the mint of Thessalonike, the image of a soldier-emperor is similarly presented. On their obverse they portray Heraclius and his eldest son Heraclius Constantine. The emperor is shown with a long beard and moustache, in military dress, holding a long cross in his right hand, and in his left hand a sword. Earlier emperors had armour and spears, but the sword was a novelty and the depiction in military dress was against a trend towards a rather civilian gesture.⁴⁶ The choice of this unusual presentation can thus be regarded as an aim to support the described image of Heraclius.

5 Conclusion

To put it pointedly, at the beginning of the 7th century the Eastern Roman Empire was facing a massive crisis. Its survival depended mainly on the successful introduction of effective crisis management. Besides generating financial resources, the mobilization of the whole population proved to be necessary.

43 See Andrea Sommerlechner, "Kaiser Herakleios und die Rückkehr des Heiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 45 (2003), 319–60; Meier, "Religionsskriege," p. 268.

44 "ἔμοι μὲν ὑμᾶς ὡς ἀδελφούς ἢ σχέσις καὶ τῆς βασιλείας ὁ τρόπος συνήρμοσεν" (Exp. Pers. 2.88–89).

45 "φεῦ τῆς ἀνάγκης ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ δεσπότης ὡς εἰς ἀφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς μάχην ὀπλίζεται" (Exp. Pers. 3.94–95); "ἀλλ' οὐ τοσοῦτον τὴν ἐμὴν πλήττει φρένα τὸ δυσπαθούντα νῦν ὄραν τὸν δεσπότην" (Exp. Pers. 3.107–108). This is propaganda at its best. But that does not mean that it was not true or at least likely, for otherwise the propaganda would have had no effect.

46 Heraclius with sword, follis year 20, Morton & Eden auction 68 (June 2014), lot 148; see Marcus Phillips, "Coinage and the Early Arab State," in *Coinage and History in the Seventh Century Near East 4*, Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013, eds. Andrew Oddy, Ingrid Schulze and Wolfgang Schulze, pp. 53–71.

Due to external threats, the military played a crucial role, and it was essential to gain and preserve the loyalty of the soldiers. Thus, it was more than personal inclination that led Heraclius on the battlefield. It was rather a reaction to the increased importance of soldiers. This change in the political behaviour of the emperor marked a turning point in the relation of power. For now, it was not sufficient to send out some generals to defend the borders of the Roman Empire. It was pivotal that the emperor himself set a personal example of engagement in warfare. On the other hand, political power seems to have been more distributed. For Heraclius had managed to gain a status that allowed him to leave the capital to other high-ranking men like Bonus and Sergius, something that was apparently unthinkable during the foregoing 300 years. While former emperors were bound to the capital, Heraclius and his successors could and did stay outside the capital for longer periods. Although the turning point discussed here might be a minor change, it was part of a larger reordering process that shaped the Eastern Roman Empire during the 7th century.

Omens of Expansionism? Revisiting the Caucasian Chapters of *De Administrando Imperio*

Kosuke Nakada

1 Introduction¹

It is well known that the Byzantine expansion to the east in the 10th and 11th centuries was a significant turning point in the political landscape of the eastern fringe of the empire, including the Transcaucasus. Both contemporaries and modern scholars tend to interpret that it was driven by imperial policies, but, viewed from broader perspective, it is possible that there were in fact more complex interactions between the imperial authority and the neighbours behind any ostensible singularity of the expansionistic process. Recently, much effort has gone into clarifying the actual process of the eastward advance from the viewpoint of the empire, but I consider that the influence of external factors on it, including the activities of autonomous princes in the frontier, and an understanding of the contemporaries on that situation, have not been fully studied.² With regard to these points, a detailed examination of the Byzantine treatise composed by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 944–959), somewhat mistakenly named *De Administrando Imperio* (often abbreviated as *DAI*), can offer us an insight into the perceptions and reactions of the Byzantines faced with the then-existing situation in the world surrounding the empire in the 10th century. It can also provide partial information about the viewpoint of the peoples on the other side, at least in the case of the Caucasians.

DAI is usually regarded as a rich source for understanding the empire's relationship with its neighbours in the middle Byzantine period. Commissioned by one of the most scholarly emperors of Byzantium, the volume was addressed to his son and future emperor, 14-year-old Romanos II (r. 959–963), aiming to pedagogically instruct him on the various ethnic groups around the empire,

¹ I should like to thank my supervisor Dr. Tim Greenwood for our useful discussions. I should also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

² A recent publication by Anthony Kaldellis also points out the necessity of considering the internal dynamics of the neighbours surrounding Byzantium: Anthony Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (New York, 2017), p. xxix.

including Armenians and Iberians, and also recommend ways of dealing with them, which was an indispensable requirement for a future ruler.³

Four out of its 53 chapters are devoted to the empire's north-eastern frontier. The four chapters, conventionally called the Caucasian chapters, provide a detailed account of the actual events and are notable for their strong degree of accuracy, except for some minor misperceptions.⁴ These chapters examine the following topics. Chapter 43 deals with the empire's communication with the Armenian Bagratid princes of Tarōn, located west of Lake Van. Chapter 44 covers the then-recent events concerning the Qaysid emirate of Manzikert and other fortifications under their control. The remaining two chapters include accounts of the Iberian Bagratids. Chapter 45 reports on the relationship with Iberians during the Byzantine attack on Theodosiopolis, which had been under Muslim control, while Chapter 46 elaborates on the negotiation with the Iberian Bagratid princes regarding the city of Artanuji in Klarjet'i. The events described in these four chapters are the most recent ones in the text.⁵

The Caucasian chapters open with a curious passage. Constantine announces that he will explain how the east was subjugated by the Roman (i.e. Byzantine) Empire again, stating that "you must not be ignorant about the part towards the rising sun, for what reason they became subject to the Romans, after they have fallen away from their rule."⁶

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- 3 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R.J.H. Jenkins, CFHB 1, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 1 (Budapest 1949; 2nd ed. Washington D.C., 1966) (henceforth *DAI*). On the nature of the text, see R.J.H. Jenkins, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio, A Commentary*, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 1.1 (Washington D.C., 1962; repr. 2012), pp. 1–8 (henceforth *DAI, Commentary*); James Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*: A Re-Examination of the Text and a Re-Evaluation of Its Evidence about the Rus," in *Les centres proto-urbain russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et orient*, ed. M. Kazanski, et al. (Réalités byzantines) 7 (Paris, 2000), pp. 301–36; Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature: Empire and After* (Philadelphia 2013), Chapter 4.
- 4 *DAI, Commentary*, pp. 156–9; Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*," esp. pp. 317–8; J. Shepard, "Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings and the Road to Aleppo," in *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999*, ed. Antony Eastmond (Publication of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies) 9 (Aldershot, 2001), p. 24.
- 5 Chapters 13 to 46 of the *DAI* are roughly arranged in chronological order as well as in a clockwise geographical order. Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*," p. 304; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Ob ypravlenii imperei: tekst, perevod, kommentarii*, ed. G.G. Litavrin and A.P. Novocel'tsev, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1991), vol. 2, p. 27.
- 6 *DAI*, 43. 4–6: "δεῖ δέ σε μηδὲ τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον ἀγνοεῖν, ὅθεν ὑπήκοα πάλιν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐγένετο, ἀφ' οὗ τὸ πρῶτον τῆς τοῦτων ἐπικρατείας ἐξέπεσον." Translation based on Jenkins, partly changed by the author.

Indeed, the area in question was successively annexed by the imperial authority during the 10th and 11th centuries.⁷ In 966 or 967, Tarōn was annexed by Byzantium after the death of Prince Ašot I.⁸ The wall of Manzikert was reduced by the army led by Bardas Phokas around the year 968 and the city was neutralized.⁹ Theodosiopolis was finally captured in 949. A part of the Iberian domain also became the Byzantine theme of Iberia under the reign of Basil II in accordance with the testament of David of Tao (or Tayk', r. 961–1000).¹⁰ Thus, this account, written well before the actual annexation of Armenia and Iberia, is often considered a precursor of the strategy that was pursued in the subsequent period of expansionism. For instance, Viada Atryunova-Fidanyan insists in the commentary on *DAI* that “chapters 43–46 are essentially the military-political programme for the Byzantine movement to the east.”¹¹

However, several scholars are re-examining the concept of Byzantine expansionism in the 10th century. Most notably, Jonathan Shepard argues that the Byzantine practice on the eastern frontier was less planned and aggressive than usually assumed; in fact, he believes that it was essentially defensive. Regarding the interpretation of the *DAI*, he argues that only selective cases were recorded because they represented a future programme to secure the most important fortifications, which could be a cause of disturbance or could be advantageously utilized by the local officers or collaborating potentates to hinder external threats such as a Muslim incursion. In so doing, the Byzantines seem to have mostly tried to preserve the locals and indirectly rule and use them, and thus the measures described in the Caucasian chapters can actually

7 On the annexation of Armenia, see H.M. Bartikian, “La conquête de l’Arménie par l’empire byzantin,” *Revue des études arméniennes* 8 (1971), pp. 327–40. Bartikian also emphasized the imposing nature of Byzantine rule.

8 Step’anos Tarōnec’i Asolik, *Patmutiwn Tiezerakan*, ed. G. Manukyan, *Matenagirk’ Hayoc’* 15–2 (Antelias, 2012), 3. 8. 26 (*Histoire Universelle*, trans. F. Macler [Paris, 1917], vol. 11, p. 41; *Des Stephanos von Tarōn Armenische Geschichte*, trans. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt [Leipzig, 1907], p. 134; Tim Greenwood, *The Universal History of Step’anos Tarōnec’i: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* [Oxford, 2017], p. 235); John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. H. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), p. 279.

9 Step’anos Tarōnec’i, 111. 8. 26 (trans. Macler, p. 41; trans. Gelzer and Burckhard, p. 134; trans. Greenwood, p. 235); T. Greenwood, “Armenian Neighbours (600–1045),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard (Cambridge, 2008), p. 357.

10 On the theme of Iberia, see C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)*, (*Oxford Studies in Byzantium*) (Oxford and New York, 2005), pp. 360–7; Karen Yuzbashyan, “L’administration byzantine en Arménie aux Xe–XIe siècles,” *Revue des études arméniennes* 10 (1973–4), pp. 139–83.

11 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Ob ypravlenii imperei*, p. 406 (commentary on Chapter 43, by V.A. Artyunova-Fidanyan).

be evaluated as flexible and defensive, rather than as aggressively expansionistic for further territorial gain.¹²

Nevertheless, the account seems to still hint that it could be partly preparing the ground for future annexations. One of the reasons for this might be the fact that the justifiable claims on Caucasian lands, which seem to have been of considerable concern in the *DAI*, were actually exploited in the course of the annexations in the coming period, as attested in the example of Tarōn and David of Tao.¹³ Moreover, as Shepard mentions, contemplation of a future occupation by the Byzantines can certainly be found in the *DAI*, although it was supposedly for defensive ends.¹⁴ This is explicit, for instance, in Chapter 44, in which Constantine insists in a strong tone that he must regain the fortresses under the control of the Qaysid emirate as the emperor had been their rightful owner and that they would serve as a barrier against Muslim incursions.¹⁵ Therefore, it cannot be totally denied that the *DAI* contains such a future programme for annexations to be conducted when opportunities arise, as Constantine apparently tries to describe the area on which the empire can claim authority on reasonable grounds.¹⁶

Yet, as Tim Greenwood mentions, the *DAI* also records events in the past in which the Byzantines failed to gain the upper hand against the Caucasian princes and even endangered their political position in the north-eastern frontier.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that Constantine included such instances in his account, although these cannot be explained only from the perspective of imperial initiative. Shepard also points out that the Byzantines had shown a tendency to allow concessions to the locals to keep them satisfied or, given the situation, refrain from unprepared annexations in the future.¹⁸ One can investigate further the reason for such practices. A factor that has not been previously

12 Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 19–40. For a later period, see also Holmes, *Basil II*, pp. 299–391; Eadem, "How the East Was Won' in the Reign of Basil II," in *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, pp. 41–56; Eadem, "Treaties between Byzantium and Islamic World," in *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History*, ed. P. de Souza (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 141–57.

13 Tim Greenwood, "Patterns of Contact and Communication: Constantinople and Armenia, 860–976," in *Armenian Constantinople*, ed. R.G. Hovannisian and S. Payaslian, (UCLA Armenian History & Culture Series) 9 (Costa Mesa, CA, 2010), pp. 77–8, 94; Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*," p. 317; Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," p. 25.

14 Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 23–5.

15 *DAI*, 44, pp. 116–28; Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 28–9.

16 Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*," p. 305; Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 24–5.

17 Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 77.

18 Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 26–7.

considered in depth is that the Caucasian princes too tried to stake their claims on the Byzantines based on their own interests and internal conditions, and tried to influence imperial practices for their benefit. There are traces of such activities in the *DAI*; it was, in fact, a dominant factor in some instances described in the Caucasian chapters. This is especially the case in Chapters 43 and 46, on which this paper will focus. That being the case, Constantine also spoke of the learning he derived from understanding the kind of behaviour exhibited by Armenians and Iberians, which could be an asset to the Byzantine side. Such an account reflects the Byzantine view on the attitudes and conduct of the Caucasian princes toward the Byzantines and the manner in which they intended to deal with such autonomous frontier potentates in the future, at least in the first half of the 10th century (i.e. the period when these events took place).¹⁹ Considering these factors while closely examining the *DAI*, the present paper seeks to reveal Byzantine practice in the Caucasus, based on their interactions with the local leading figures, and discuss how the Byzantines maintained their relationship with the locals.

2 The Place of the Caucasian Chapters in the *DAI*

As stated earlier, the *DAI* was composed by Constantine VII (or at least under his supervision) for his 14-year-old son, Romanos, as an educative treatise on foreign peoples. Therefore, the completion of the final version possibly dates to the mid-10th century (most probably in 951/2). The geographical scope of the text is significantly wide, stretching from the Caliphate in the east to Spain in the west, with especially detailed accounts on the Balkans, the Pontic Steppe, and the Transcaucasian princes. Its accuracy may be ascribed to the nature of the informants, and perhaps the editorial process with the partial assistance of state bureaucracy in procuring the materials. However, though the work contains reports from reliable sources, such as official documents, a part of it remains undigested and disorganized, and therefore it may be regarded as an excessively detailed and esoteric book for a teenager. Concerning this point, James Howard-Johnston reinforced and modified Romilly J.H. Jenkins's thesis of two distinct editorial phases and argued that the *DAI* was developed from a

19 As Howard-Johnston points out, all the events recorded in the Caucasian chapters possibly date back to the first half of the 10th century. See Howard-Johnston, "The *De Administrando Imperio*," p. 317. He also argues for the possibility of Constantine relying on the materials prepared by his father, Leo VI (r. 886–912), who was also renowned for several compilations.

working draft, which reflects Constantine's scholarly concern, sharing interests with his other compilation works such as *Excerpta de Legationibus*, *De Cerimoniis*, and *De Thematibus*. Then, a hasty editorial process resulted in some part of it retaining the former characteristics of an accumulation of unassimilated disorganized documents, while the other part was edited into an instructive volume.²⁰ As for the Caucasian chapters, these are placed in the intermediately processed part, and the contents clearly reveal that these went through the second editorial process from the original version made in the beginning of the 10th century, and therefore may be classified as relatively organized ones.²¹ The materials contained in this part are presumably drawn from official documents (according to Howard-Johnston, that of the *dromos*), which enables a close analysis of the details of mutual diplomatic activities.²² These are the cases where the empire could justify authority over the Caucasian princes,²³ but another notable feature is, as noted in the preceding section, that Constantine does not hide the failures of the Byzantine side. These might have been included as cautionary tales or negative exempli of his predecessor Romanos I Lekapenos (r. 920–944); some of these can be found elsewhere in *DAI*.²⁴ Yet, it is noteworthy that in the course of describing the failures, and in other parts of the Caucasian chapters, Constantine also relates the activities of the Caucasian side, which were considerably responsible for the diplomatic measures taken by the empire. It consequently describes the diplomatic process “as it was” and contains factors that cannot be explained merely from the Byzantine perspective. One may assume that from such an account, Romanos II could learn not only diplomatic skills but also the disposition of the foreign peoples involved in the events. Whether Constantine did this intentionally to provide

20 *DAI, Commentary*, pp. 1–8; Howard-Johnston, “The *De Administrando Imperio*,” pp. 308–12. According to Howard-Johnston, Chapters 1–13 can be regarded as the most processed ones, while 14–26 and 47–53 are the least. Chapters 27–46, which form the core of the text, can be placed somewhere in the middle in terms of the progress of the edition, but quality varies widely in each chapter. The Caucasian chapters are the most processed ones in this part.

21 Howard-Johnston, “The *De Administrando Imperio*,” p. 326.

22 Howard-Johnston, “The *De Administrando Imperio*,” p. 317.

23 However, as Constantine selected only the actual cases where Byzantium could claim authority more or less effectively, the subject is quite limited. Howard-Johnston, “The *De Administrando Imperio*,” p. 318.

24 N. Evans, “Kastron, Rabaḍ and Arḍūn: the Case of Artanuji,” in *From Constantinople to Frontier: the City and the Cities*, ed. N.S.M. Matheou, T. Kampianki, and L.M. Bondioli, (Medieval Mediterranean) 106 (Leiden and Boston, 2016), p. 346; Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” p. 27.

Romanos with information about these peoples is uncertain, but a passage from the proem that divides the text into four sections is suggestive:

(I) First, in what situation what nation can serve the Romans, and in what to hinder, and how and by what other nations each can be engaged and subdued; (II) then, on their insatiate and greedy thought and the gifts they ask to receive unduly; (III) next, also on the difference between other nations, their genealogies, and habits and conduct of life, and the situation and climate of the land of their settlement, its topography and measurement, and furthermore, on events which have occurred at certain times between the Romans and different nations; (IV) and thereafter, what was renewed from time to time in our state, and also throughout the Roman empire.²⁵

According to Howard-Johnston, each element roughly corresponds to the order of the four parts in the whole text, although not perfectly (I: Ch. 1–13, II: Ch. 13, III: Ch. 13–48, IV: Ch. 48–53), and the Caucasian chapters are placed in the third part, where episodes in the past with the locals of the foreign lands and their relationship with the empire are discussed.²⁶ Of course, this part deals mostly with proving the legitimacy of their claim on the east, which can undoubtedly be pragmatic knowledge in actual diplomacy. However, if we consider the general aim of the treatise, which precedes the above quotation and insists that a ruler with sharpened experience and knowledge shall not stumble,²⁷ there is good reason for Constantine to provide an explanation of the characteristics of the Caucasian neighbours; these include activities hostile to the empire as well, as they could have been useful to Romanos in foreign policy decision-making in the future. Let us now consider each chapter to analyse what the Byzantines discovered about the Caucasians.

25 *DAI*, Pr. 14–24: “πρῶτα μὲν ποῖον ἔθνος κατὰ τί μὲν ὠφελῆσαι δύναται Ῥωμαίους, κατὰ τί δὲ βλάψαι, {καὶ ποῖον} καὶ πῶς ἕκαστον τούτων καὶ παρὰ ποίου δύναται ἔθνος καὶ πολεμείσθαι καὶ ὑποτάσσεσθαι, ἔπειτα περὶ τῆς ἀπλήστου καὶ ἀκορέστου αὐτῶν γνώμης, καὶ ὧν παραλόγως ἐξαιτοῦνται λαμβάνειν, εἴθ’ οὕτως καὶ περὶ διαφορᾶς ἐτέρων ἔθνων, γενεαλογίας τε <αὐτῶν> καὶ ἔθων καὶ βίου διαγωγῆς καὶ θέσεως κράσεως τῆς κατοικουμένης παρ’ αὐτῶν γῆς καὶ περιγησίσεως αὐτῆς καὶ σταδισμοῦ, πρὸς τούτοις καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐν τινὶ καιρῷ μεταξὺ Ῥωμαίων καὶ διαφόρων ἔθνων συμβηθηκότων, καὶ μετὰ τούτα, ὅσα ἐν τῇ καθ’ ἡμᾶς πολιτείᾳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ κατὰ τινὰς χρόνους ἐκαινοτομήθη.” Translation based on Jenkins, partly changed by the author. The numbering is inserted by the author.

26 Howard-Johnston, “The *De Administrando Imperio*,” p. 304.

27 *DAI*, Pr. 10–14.

3 Armenians and Their Behaviour: *DAI*, Chapter 43

Chapter 43 reflects the proposals made by the Armenian princes in Tarōn to safeguard their own interests.²⁸ The situation prevailing in the region towards the end of the 9th century appears to have boosted this inclination. In the 9th century, Tarōn was divided by Bagratid princes, at the request of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph, to whom they owed allegiance. Towards the end of the century, however, inheritance issues led to the intervention of other princes and emirs in Armenia. As a result, Tarōn was temporarily occupied by the Shaybānid emir until the death of 'Īsā Shaybānī. Grigor Bagratuni (Krikorikios in *DAI*, d. c.930) was able to recover his position then, but the political situation in Tarōn remained unstable.²⁹ In fact, succession problems between the two lines in the family formed a significant factor in this chapter. Such internal struggles featured in the general situation of Armenia around that time; even after the coronation of Ašot I in 884 and the formation of the Bagratid Kingdom thereafter, the Armenian political structure kept fluctuating mainly because of the strife among the autonomous princely houses.³⁰ They usually sought to achieve autonomy and regional dominance and did not hesitate to ally with external powers, either Byzantines or Muslims, if it could benefit their cause.³¹ Thus, there was a good reason for Armenians to make use of Byzantine authority, especially when the authority of Caliphate was declining.

Moreover, there was a political environment which enabled them to claim their insistences to the external powers, especially to the Byzantines. On this

28 On the other hand, Greenwood interprets this as the Armenians competing for imperial favour. Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 90.

29 John Catholicos/Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, *Patmut'ivn hayoc'*, ed. G. Ter-Vardanean, Matenagirk' Hayoc' 11–3 (Antelias, 2010), 34; Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, *History of Armenia*, trans. K.H. Maksoudian (Atlanta, 1987), pp. 145–7; Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 82; B. Martin-Hisard, "Constantinople et les *Archontes* du monde Caucasiens dans *le livre des cérémonies*, book 2, 48," *Travaux et Mémoires* 13 (2000), pp. 375–81; A. Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, trans. N. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1976), pp. 65–6. On Grigor, see R.-J. Lilie, et al. eds, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinische Zeit*, Abt. I (641–867), *Prolegomena*, 5 vols and list of abbreviations, (1998–2002); Abt. II, *Prolegomena*, 7 vols, list of abbreviations and index (2002–2013) (henceforth *PmbZ*), Grigor I (of Tarōn) #22497.

30 Armenian lands were divided among hereditary lords called *naxarar*, and they formed the basic part of the Armenian political structure. See N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, trans. N.G. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1970), pp. 183–251; *DAI, Commentary*, pp. 157–8; Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium (600–1025)* (London, 1996), pp. 201–2; J. Laurent, revised by M. Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886* (Lisbon, 1980), pp. 96–108.

31 Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold*, p. 51; Whittow, *The Making*, pp. 202–3.

point, their fluctuating position between Byzantium and the emirs must be taken into account. As for Grigor of Tarōn, Constantine's account begins from his act of double-dealing between Byzantium and the Muslims, even after his submission during the reign of Leo VI (886–912).³² The situation seems precarious at first glance, but it was actually exploitable for gaining autonomous status as the Armenians could play the role of a buffer and draw profit from both sides by playing off one against another.³³ The Byzantine frontier was inevitably vulnerable to such treacherous attitudes, as the imperial authority tried to preserve the local political structure for indirect rule. Nevertheless, it was necessary for the empire to concede to the troublesome princes even when they made strong claims, as they were utilizable for expanding imperial influence in the region without mobilizing military force; the Byzantine presence in some parts of the Caucasian lands, especially in Armenia, was still limited at the beginning of the 10th century, as the suzerainty of the 'Abbāsids continued to be superior.³⁴ The episodes in *DAI* reflect this situation. Mistrust about the Armenians is expressed elsewhere in Byzantine texts, which must reflect experience of their political volatility along the frontier.³⁵

Thus, although Grigor at first kept refusing the summons from the empire on the pretext that the Muslims would raid his territory in his absence,³⁶ contact between the empire and Tarōn seems to have increased because of the request from the Armenians during the conflict among the Armenian princes. According to the *DAI*, during the battle, Grigor captured two sons of the prince

32 *DAI*, 43, 7–26.

33 See P. Karlin-Hayter, "Krikorikios de Tarōn," in *Actes du XIVe Congrès international des Etudes byzantines* (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 345–58, repr. in Eadem, *Studies in Byzantine Political History* (Vaiorum Collected Studies) 141 (London, 1981), Chapter XIV, esp. p. 345.

34 Cf. *DAI*, 43, 85–88; Greenwood, "Patterns," pp. 79–80.

35 On the distrust of the Armenians, see *De Velitatione Bellica*, in G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986), 11; *Jus Graecoromanum*, ed. I. Zepos and P. Zepos, 8 vols, (Athens, 1931; repr. Darmstadt, 1962) 1, 247; N.G. Garsoïan, "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire," in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. H. Ahrweiler and A. Laiou (Washington D.C., 1998), p. 63; N. Oikonomides, "L'organisation de la frontière orientale de Byzance aux Xe-XIe siècles et le Taktikons de l'Escorial," *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* 1 (Bucharest, 1974), pp. 285–302, reprinted in N. Oikonomides, *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VIIe-XVe.s.)*, (Vaiorum Collected Studies) 47 (London, 1976), XXIV, pp. 297–300; Idem, *Les listes de préséance Byzantins des IXe et Xe siècles*, (Paris, 1972), pp. 346, 400; J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990) (Série Byzantina Sorbonensia) 9 pp. 324–9. As Greenwood suggests, Constantine's mistrust of Grigor might have been addressed at not Grigor but all Armenians in general. See Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 94.

36 *DAI*, 43, 23–26.

called *arkaikas*, who had been related to the Bagratid king Smbat I the Martyr (r. 890–914).³⁷ As Greenwood suggests, this implies that Smbat tried to use the Byzantine authority although the Byzantine presence in Armenia was far less significant than that of the Caliph, as mentioned above.³⁸ Receiving the petition, Leo VI dispatched an envoy and first summoned Grigor's bastard son, Ašot, to Constantinople, and then Grigor's brother Apoganem (perhaps an Armenian form of the Arabic name, Abū Ghanum, died c.920) with the two captives.³⁹ They were given the rank of *protospatharios*. Subsequently, Grigor himself was brought to Constantinople. The emperor bestowed on him the title of *strategos* of Tarōn, the rank of *magistros*, which is an unusually high rank for a *strategos*, a residence called Barbaros in Constantinople, and a stipend of 20 pounds, consisting of 10 pounds in gold and 10 pounds in silver.⁴⁰ After this, Apoganem visited Constantinople again. He was promoted to the rank of *patrikios* and allowed to marry the daughter of Constantine Lips, who had been the envoy to Tarōn. Apoganem requested that he be allotted a house, like the one given to his brother, and this too was granted. However, he died on his return to Armenia without going through with the marriage. Grigor, in turn, wrote to the emperor requesting a meeting and claiming his stipend. The emperor fulfilled his request and permitted his further claim to possess the residence again.⁴¹ These events occurred during the reign of Leo VI, and the *DAI* records his purpose behind admitting Grigor's last request: "both because he had recently subordinated himself and because it was for provoking in other

37 *DAI*, 43, 26–34; *PmbZ*, Ašot II. Arkaikas (von Tarōn), #22644, #22644A. On the identification of the two sons of *arkaikas*, see Karlin-Hayter, "Krikorikios," esp. pp. 346–7; *PmbZ*, Grigor I (of Tarōn) #22497. Here, Constantine mentions that "Krikorikos/Gregorios the Patrikios" is the cousin (*exadelphoi*) of *arkaikas*. Most scholars (*DAI*, *Commentary*; Martin-Hisard, "Constantinople et les Archontes,;" *PmbZ*, Grigor I. [von Tarōn] #22497) regard these as indicating the same person, that is, Grigor of Tarōn. On the other hand, Karlin-Hayter argues that Krikorikos is a different person as he is called *patrikios*, and identifies him with a member of Arcruni family. However, there is no positive evidence to support this hypothesis.

38 Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 80; Idem, "Armenian Neighbours," p. 353. Ašot I and Smbat I were recognised by both Byzantine emperors and the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs. Although not called by a royal title by the Byzantines, they were recognized as the "prince of princes (*archon tōn archontōn*)" and called "beloved son" or "spiritual son." Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i, 29. 10 (trans. Maksoudian, p. 129), 31. 3 (trans. Maksoudian, p. 138). See also *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatori De Ceremoniis*, ed. J.J. Reiske, 2 vols, CSHB 16 (Bonn 1829–30), II.48. On their privileged status, Martin-Hisard, "Constantinople et Archontes," p. 421.

39 *PmbZ*, Apoganem #20545.

40 *DAI*, 43, 34–71.

41 *DAI*, 43, 72–88.

princes of the east a similar zeal for subordination to the Romans.”⁴² However, here we must note that Leo’s actions are rather reactive and that most offers were motivated by the Armenians, although Leo must have regarded these as moments that could lead to extending his influence on those princes oriented more to the east.

Voices from Armenia became clearer during the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos. Around 923, Grigor requested a change of residence from Barbaros in Constantinople to an estate on the eastern fringe of the Empire.⁴³ Grigor’s motive was to find a place of refuge in case of an invasion by the Muslims. Moreover, at least one of the alternative estates he proposed had been confiscated during the then-recent revolts within the empire, and as Greenwood points out, it is highly probable that Grigor had been aware of the internal affairs of the empire and tried to exploit the opportunity.⁴⁴ Romanos I sanctioned his request and gave him “the estate of Gregoras” in Keltzene located to the northwest of Tarōn, and the house of Barbaros was returned.

At this point, two protests were brought to the notice of Romanos concerning the privileges extended to Grigor. On the one hand, Grigor’s nephew T’ornik (Tornikios) complained that Grigor had no right to exchange his residence for the estate, as the residence in Constantinople belonged to his lineage, since it had originally been granted to his father Apoganem.⁴⁵ Moreover, T’ornik insisted that he would rather return the right to the emperor. On the other hand, Adarnase of Iberia, Ašot II of Armenia, and Gagik I of Vaspurakan jointly protested that the *roga* for Tarōn was excessively privileged. On hearing this, Romanos I readily forfeited the estate and abolished the *roga*.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, after the death of Grigor, his son Bagrat (Pankratios) visited Constantinople and was promoted to the rank of *patrikios* and appointed as *strategos* of Tarōn like his father.⁴⁷ He also asked to marry a woman from the imperial family, and although this was not permitted, the emperor decided to give him the sister of Theophylact the *magistros*, a high-ranking officer. Bagrat then demanded that

42 *DAI*, 43, 85–88. Translation by Jenkins, partly changed by the author.

43 *DAI*, 43, 89–99.

44 Greenwood, “Patterns,” p. 90. Grigor requested specifically for the estates of Tatzates or Gregoras. Tatzates (probably Tačat in Armenian) was an Armenian who took part in the revolt of Bardas Boilas around 923/4 and whose property had been confiscated. See *PmbZ*, Tačat #27533. As for Gregoras, his identity is uncertain, although Adontz assumed that he was perhaps Gregoras Iberitzes, who was also among those who had failed in the revolt of Constantine Doukas, his father-in-law. See N. Adontz, “Les Taronites en Arménie et à Byzance,” *Byzantion* 9 (1934), p. 725; *DAI, Commentary*, p. 164.

45 *PmbZ*, T’ornik #28364.

46 *DAI*, 43, 100–149.

47 *PmbZ*, Bagrat II (von Tarōn) #20733.

he be given the estate in Keltzene as his wife's residence, on condition that he would return it after her death; this was granted too.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Bagrat and his brother Ašot were rivals of their cousin T'ornik, who offered to concede his estate to Byzantium rather than be oppressed by Bagrat's lineage.⁴⁹ Romanos accepted it, but Bagrat pleaded once again; he proposed that he would submit the estate in Oghnut (Oulnoutin in Greek) and instead take possession of T'ornik's lineage, insisting that they would not be able to do without that land. The emperor agreed to this as well, according to "his own goodness."⁵⁰

In this episode, it seems that the interests of the Armenians prevailed over the concern of the Byzantines. This is understandable if we consider the existing situation in Tarōn, as explained earlier.

4 Negotiations Concerning the City of Artanuji: *DAI*, Chapter 46

Chapter 46 of *DAI* reveals that the situation of the Iberian princes in the historical region of Tao-Klarjet'i was not unlike that of the Armenians, although Byzantine authority had been relatively more established there. In that area, the heads of the Iberian Bagratids had been given the title of *kouropalates* from the first half of the 9th century. In 888, Adarnase I (d. 923) was crowned as king of the K'art'velians (*K'art'velta Mep'e*), but the political structure was fragmented, as was the case in Armenia, due to the presence of autonomous princes (*mamp'ali, erist'avi*). Internal strife among them and their preference for retaining their autonomous status also formed one of the central factors of Chapter 46.⁵¹

48 *DAI*, 43, 100–163. On this occasion, Bagrat left a will that the children from this marriage should inherit the land. As Greenwood points out, this is not the Armenian legal custom, but a Roman one. See Greenwood, "Armenian Neighbours," p. 353. There is even a possibility that a conflict between two lineages arose from the dispute over which legal culture to adopt. I would like to thank Dr. Tim Greenwood for suggesting this point in our personal communication. Concerning the legal status of Armenians, *Basilika* preserves a law from the Justinian *Novel*, which insists that they are subject to the Roman law. See *Basilicorum libri LX*, Ser. A, textus, ed. H.J. Sheltema and N. van der Wal (Groningen 1955–1988), XLV. 6. Interestingly, a passage concerning the status of Africans in *Novellae* 36 is inserted in XLV. 6.2, in which a scholium explains that "it is the same as that you will come to know in the foregoing *novella* on Armenians." See *Basilicorum Libri LX*, Ser. B, Scholia, ed. H.J. Sheltema (Groningen 1953–1985), XLV. 6.2.

49 *DAI*, 43, 163–177.

50 *DAI*, 43, 177–186.

51 On the general situation, see C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, (Georgetown, 1963), pp. 437–99; Martin-Hisard, "Constantinople et les *Archontes*," pp. 429–50. For Artanuji, see R.W. Edwards, "The Fortifications of Artvin: A Second Preliminary Report

Constantine begins the account with the history of the inheritance of the city of Artanuji by the Bagratids, details of the genealogy of their current members, and the richness of the city based on its strategic location on the commercial route.⁵² In the first part, Constantine mentions the expulsion of Ašot Kiskases (d. 939) by Gurgen the *magistros* of Tao (d. 941) in the course of his conflict with the *exousiastes* of Abasgia, but this is actually the aftermath of the main topic of the chapter.⁵³ He then provides details about the preceding attempt made by Ašot Kiskases to offer the city of Artanuji to the empire and the reactions of the imperial government under Romanos I and of several other Iberian Bagratids including David II, the titular king of the K'art'velians (r. 923–937).⁵⁴ Among the Iberian princes, Ašot Kiskases was a member of the Tao branch of the Bagratids, and he inherited Artanuji as the ruler after the death of his brother Gurgen in 923.⁵⁵ Gurgen II of Tao, whose wife was the daughter of Ašot Kiskases, was one of the chief figures of the senior branch of Bagratids and he pursued his ambitions of extending his rule to the neighbouring areas.⁵⁶ David II became the king after the death of his father Adarnase I, who held the title of both *kouropalates* and the king of the K'art'velians. Meanwhile, the Byzantine title of *kouropalates* went to his brother Ašot.⁵⁷ Thus, as Steven Runciman argues, the events in this passage can plausibly be dated to between 923 and 930, judging from the lifetime of the characters and other factors.⁵⁸

on the Marchlands of Northeast Turkey," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 40 (1986), pp. 171–4; Evans, "Kastron," pp. 345–64.

- 52 On the importance of Artanuji, see H.A. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. N.G. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1965), p. 146; Evans, "Kastron," pp. 348–60. Artanuji being one of the strategic strongpoints and crossroads on the commercial route had long been accepted *a priori*, but Evans demonstrated that Artanuji would not have flourished without three 10th-century factors, i.e. the rise of the Iberian Bagratids, the development of the monastic network, and the weakened 'Abbāsīd authority.
- 53 *DAI*, 46, 3–48. On these figures, see *PmbZ*, Ašot II. (von Klaržet'i) #20468, Gurgen II (von Tao), #22529. Gurgen's title was *erist'avi erist'avis* or duke of dukes, which meant the commander in chief. Evans, "Kastron," p. 349; R.G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (London, 1989), p. 320.
- 54 *PmbZ*, David II, #21423.
- 55 *DAI*, *Commentary*, pp. 177–8.
- 56 *DAI*, *Commentary*, p. 178; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 495–6.
- 57 Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 493; *PmbZ*, Adarnase II. (#20099), Ašot II. (Kuropolates Iberias) #20647.
- 58 *DAI*, *Commentary*, p. 169; S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign* (Cambridge, 1929), p. 179, n. 1.

In short, this episode describes the failure of the Byzantines to hold the city at the invitation of Ašot, because of the objections raised by the Iberian lords. The chapter is interpreted as typical of a diplomatic fiasco or a warning toward unreflective annexation.⁵⁹ Again, however, the activity of the Iberian side is noteworthy as a background to Byzantine political practices. From the beginning, it was Ašot Kiskases who made contact with the Byzantines for settling the dispute regarding the city of Artanuji with Gurgen II, his son-in-law. When a certain monk named Agapios from the Kyminas monastery visited Artanuji, Ašot commissioned him to go to Romanos I and repeat the exact words he was told.⁶⁰ According to the content of the message, the annexation of Artanuji seems to have been motivated by Ašot's request. Concession of an estate due to internal strife is similar to the offer of Tornikios of Tarōn in Chapter 43. The Caucasian princes seem to have been willing to resort to such political options for their survival.

Hearing the statement made by Ašot, Romanos I dispatched an officer named Symeon to Constantine *protospatharios* and *manglabites*, who was travelling to Iberia to grant Gurgen II the title of *magistros*.⁶¹ On the orders of the emperor, Constantine changed direction to head towards Artanuji, with the *tourmarches*, officers, and a body of soldiers extracted from the Chaldian *theme*. However, they were hindered by a Bagratid prince, David II, who was the titular king. As the background, Constantine refers to the tension among the four brothers including Ašot and David II and their cousin Gurgen II after the death of Adarnase I, the former king and *kouropalates*; David feared that the envoy might be going to grant the other side the title of *kouropalates*, which meant official recognition of superiority by the Byzantine emperor.⁶² Constantine escaped under the pretext of carrying out his original mission to bring the title of *magistros* to Gurgen.⁶³ This rivalry among the

59 Greenwood, "Patterns," p. 77; Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," p. 27; Evans, "Kastron," p. 345–6.

60 *DAI*, 46, 49–64.

61 *DAI*, 46, 64–68. Runciman (*DAI, Commentary*, p. 179) argues that this person can be identified with Constantine Lips or more possibly with Constantine Gonglyes, but *PmbZ* (Konstantinos #23823) and Evans ("Kastron," p. 346 n. 3) reject these suggestions.

62 *DAI*, 46, 74–95. On the importance of the title for the Byzantines, see L. Tavadze, "Title of *kouropalates* in Tao-Klarjet'i Bagrationi royal house, Political situation of Kartvelian Kingdom in the 9th and 10th Centuries," *Proceedings of the Institute of Georgian History* (Tbilisi, 2012), pp. 63–100 (in Georgian; English summary, pp. 99–100).

63 Prior to this, Gurgen had dispatched an envoy to the empire with gifts requesting the rank of *magistros* or *kouropalates*; as a result, he was going to be bestowed the title of *magistros*. This fact seems to have made the four brothers suspicious. *DAI*, 46, 86–91.

family members and the use of external authority during an internal strife also seems to parallel the case of Tarōn.

After visiting Gurgen, Constantine the *protospatharios* rushed to Artanuji to fulfil the imperial order, but at this point Ašot was still in his city, although Constantine placed the flag on the wall to announce that Artanuji was now under their control.⁶⁴ This indicates the possibility that the Byzantines were willing to make use of the existing potentate, as was common practice on the Byzantine eastern frontier.⁶⁵

The Byzantine presence in Artanuji naturally met with opposition from other princes, but interestingly, Gurgen II collaborated with David II in spite of their dispute over the bestowal of the title of *kouropalates*. Moreover, they threatened the emperor Romanos, intimating that they would ally with the Muslim.⁶⁶ As Shepard implies, their warnings to the Byzantine emperor may have been taken seriously due to the existing circumstances in the Caucasian land.⁶⁷ There were princes like Grigor in Tarōn who undoubtedly collaborated with the Muslims. Indeed, the military expeditions that Romanos dispatched to Dvin in Armenia, which was the seat of the Muslim governor, failed twice as the locals supported the Muslims. The attempt in 922 failed as Ašot II Erkat' (r. 914–929), the king, assisted the Muslims.⁶⁸ In 927, the local people prevented the Byzantine army from entering the city.⁶⁹ Romanos might have feared the same situation befalling Iberia, and he decided to retreat readily.⁷⁰ As mentioned above, in such a political environment, the princes could effectually stake their claim diplomatically for their own profit and for preserving autonomy.

Chapter 46 points to the intricate relationship among the princes and their subtle political manipulation that led to the Byzantine practices in the past. Thus, as is the case with Chapter 43, this account is also informative about the circumstances on the Caucasian side.

64 *DAI*, 46, 97–117.

65 See Holmes, *Basil II*, pp. 299–391; Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” p. 22; Whittow, *The Making*, pp. 195–220. Thus, Ašot might have been entrusted with rule over the city under the aegis of the empire. Indeed, he remained in the city until he was expelled by Gurgen II after the withdrawal of the Byzantines.

66 *DAI*, 46.

67 Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” p. 27.

68 Step'anos Tarōnec'i, 3. 6. 7 (trans. Macler, pp. 24–5, trans. Gelzer and Burckhardt, p. 124, trans. Greenwood, pp. 221–22); Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates*, p. 75.

69 *Ibn-el-Athiri chronicon, quod perfectissimum inscribitur*, ed. C.J. Tornberg, 14 vols, (Leiden 1851–76), 8.129; Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates*, p. 77.

70 *DAI*, 46, 135–142.

5 The Perspective of the Byzantines

One can now understand why Constantine, with his grasp of the situation on the frontier when he composed the *DAI*, includes elements about the Caucasian side, and what he expected Romanos II to learn from it. In sum, the *DAI* is richly informative on the autonomous and fragmented character of the princes in Caucasus and their advantageous position on the frontier.⁷¹ As we have seen, they were also able to influence and alter imperial decisions to further their own interests while the Byzantines were only occasionally able to offer a passive response. Another episode in the Caucasian chapters demonstrates that the opinion of a field commander also counted. Constantine mentions that he made a compromise while accepting the terms offered by the Iberians concerning their border on the river Erax (modern Aras) in accordance with the opinion of the *domestikos tōn scholōn*, John Kourkouas, an experienced commander, who apparently was familiar with the situation on the frontier.⁷²

These episodes collectively indicate that Byzantine practices were not conducted in a top-down manner, but that feedback from the frontier was influential in decision making. Even when the general situation in the east was favourable to the empire,⁷³ they could not ignore the inclination of the local potentates. As we have explained, two factors compelled them to do so. On the one hand, the presence of local elites was useful for defending the frontier, as noted by other scholars.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the Caucasians used their

71 Of course, we must bear in mind that some princes irresistibly approached the empire for their survival, as can be seen in the case of T'ornik in *DAI*, Chapter 43, and Ašot Kiskases in Chapter 46. Nevertheless, those could also influence imperial decision making.

72 *DAI*, 45, 212–213. See Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” pp. 26–7; *PmbZ*, Ioannes Kurkuas #22924.

73 See Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” p. 20. However, note that there was a temporary revival of ‘Abbāsīd power around the reign of Leo VI. Moreover, the empire did not try to exploit the weakness immediately. See Greenwood, “Patterns,” p. 79; Shepard, “Equilibrium to Expansion (886–1025),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 496; Whittow, *The Making*, pp. 327–34.

74 See the works of Shepard and Holmes, cited in note 12 above. Regarding this point, two military treatises from this period, namely the *Taktika* of Leo VI and *De Velitatione Bellica*, commissioned by Nikephoros Phokas, recommend that local commanders should respond to incursion at their own discretion. *The Taktika of Leo VI*, ed. and trans. G.T. Dennis, *CFHB* 49, *Dumbarton Oaks Texts* 12 (Washington D.C., 2010; 2nd ed. 2014), xviii; *De Velitatione Bellica*, Pr. 3, xvi. 4, xvii. 2. Leo VI implies even more clearly the willingness to choose military officers from the existing local potentate so as to use the existing network and resources for defence. *Taktika*, iv. 3. For an interpretation, see J.-C. Cheynet, “The Byzantine Aristocracy (8–13th Centuries),” in J.-C. Cheynet, *The Byzantine Aristocracy and Its Military Function* (Vaiorum Collected Studies) 859 (Aldershot, 2006), i. pp. 17ff.

strategic location as a diplomatic card for negotiating with the empire to extract concessions.

Thus, Constantine recognized that the relationship with the Caucasian peoples had developed in an interactive manner and he expressed his willingness to consider this kind of practice for the future when he included it in the *DAI*. It is possible that he considered it useful for the intended reader, Romanos II, to be aware of the typical character and behaviour of the Caucasians towards the empire – including their craftiness and artfulness – in order to be ready to deal with them.⁷⁵

6 Conclusion

Constantine clearly realized that the empire could exploit its rightful claim to annex Caucasian lands, although armed intervention was a last resort and diplomatic solutions were preferred, as Shepard points out. Armies were mobilized mainly for defensive aims.⁷⁶ Recent studies disclose that the Byzantine empire used flexible methods in the course of their actual eastward movements in the 10th and 11th centuries. Catherine Holmes plausibly demonstrates

Although these mainly concern the troops of the *theme*, it is highly possible that the same principle was applicable to the Armenians and Iberians. In fact, although not concerned with military matters, a letter of Patriarch Nicholas I to John V Katholikos of Armenia preserved only in Armenian attests to the Byzantine willingness to leave Armenian matters to the Katholikos. Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i, 54 (trans. Maksoudian, pp. 189–90). In addition, in a letter to an anonymous emir, Romanos I also indicated a readiness to place all princes in the Caucasus under the authority of the recipient, who would be appointed as the “prince of princes.” Theodore Daphnopatēs, *Correspondence*, ed. J. Darrouzès and L.G. Westerink (Paris, 1978), no. 4. The identification of the emir is controversial. See A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, French edition by M. Canard, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1935–68), 2–1, pp. 425–7; Karen Yuzbashyan, *Armyanskie gosudarstva epochi Bagratidov i Vizantiya, IX–XI vv* (Moscow, 1988), pp. 268–75. See also B. Martin-Hisard, “Constantinople et les *Archontes*,” pp. 425–6. Of course, Constantine is claiming in *DAI* that the Caucasian princes are subjugated to the empire (See *DAI*, 44, 21–23) and Ter-Ghewondyan links this attitude with the coming expansionism (Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates*, pp. 81–82). However, it must be noted that their perception of the region is multi-layered. Indeed, the emperor himself also clarifies that all the eastern land used to be subject to the prince of princes in the same passage. From here, it seems that the Byzantines accepted the governance of the local leading figures, although they claimed nominal hegemony over the region.

75 Cf. the nature of *DAI* mentioned above section 2.

76 Shepard, “Road to Aleppo,” p. 40.

that most of the occupation took the shape of a negotiation rather than an armed intervention.⁷⁷

The account of the Caucasian chapters may partially be regarded as the blueprint for such a future that anticipates changes in the Byzantine eastern frontier in an adaptable manner. Yet, the present paper also argues that the practices described in *DAI* were by no means feasible solely through Byzantine initiative, and that approaches and pressures from the Caucasian side formed an essential factor in the shift of the political order in north-eastern Anatolia around the first half of the 10th century. Of course, one must bear in mind that the picture offered in the *DAI* is imperfect,⁷⁸ and that there are multi-layered contacts that are not fully recorded.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, even in the *DAI*, the attitude of the princes is divergent. In the course of their complicated relationship, different types of approaches to the empire are seen; some could be exploited by the Byzantines but others forced them to take an undesirable decision at times. By including such situations as they actually were, the account of the treatise seems to have provided information on several typical features of such autonomous princes in Iberia and Armenia, which Romanos II should be conscious of when he negotiates with them in the future. This can also be a clue to understanding the perception of the Byzantines about the *status quo* concerning the mutual relationship on the eastern frontier.

77 See works cited in note 12 above.

78 Shepard, "Road to Aleppo," pp. 23–4.

79 Greenwood, "Armenian Neighbours," p. 364.

The Madara Horseman and Triumphal Inscriptions in Krum's Early Medieval Bulgaria (c.803-14)

Mirela Ivanova

1 Introduction¹

Nearly a hundred inscriptions on stone dating to the first Bulgarian polity (c.681-1018) were originally published as a corpus by Veselin Beshevliev in 1936.² These offer the main native textual source for early Bulgarian history, and possibly the only such source prior to conversion.³ Their significance, therefore, cannot be understated.

This chapter seeks to do two things. Firstly, to move away from studies of the inscriptions as passive sources of evidence for a meta-narrative, or 'trend,' of the administrative and institutional continuity and growth of the Bulgarian 'state,' by offering a framework for their study which is more sensitive to the agency and materiality of text and the viewing communities of epigraphic monuments. Secondly, to apply such a framework to two contrasting kinds of inscriptions found in Bulgaria. The first are the inscriptions surrounding the Madara Horseman, including what is deemed the oldest inscription mentioning Tervel. As well as re-dating the monument to the 9th century, I suggest the text and image served as a 'private' monumental archive for a ruling elite, which sought to construct institutional historical memory in the Bulgarian polity after a period of disruption in the 8th century. The second inscriptions I consider are the triumphal inscriptions dated to the reign of Krum. I argue

1 I am extremely grateful to Jonathan Shepard, Ida Toth and Alex Middleton for reading and commenting on various drafts of this paper.

2 84 are in stone in the 1992 edition of V. Beshevliev, *Purvolbulgarski nadpisi* (Sofia, 1936; 2nd ed. 1979; 3rd ed. 1992 (paperback)). Henceforth I will be referring to the 1979 edition unless otherwise stated, as no additional material was added to the 1992 paperback. Granberg offers a larger figure of 154, which includes runic inscriptions, but these are impossible to date specifically and mostly un-deciphered: A. Granberg, "Shift of Written Language and Alphabet as Part of the State Formation Process and the Christianisation (A Comparative study of Bulgaria and Rus)," in *Medieval Christianitas: Different regions, Faces, Approaches*, eds. T. Stepanov and G. Kazakov (Sofia, 2010), p. 4.

3 For the only other such source, the *Immennik*, see below.

that, in different ways to the Horseman, these were public monuments whose text, both due to their material manifestations, as well as what it did and *did not* say, granted different levels of information to different kinds of viewing and reading audiences in different ways. And, therefore, that inscribed texts under Krum played *active roles* in the process of constructing power in the first Bulgarian polity, not simply in the process of communicating it.

Half of the inscriptions in Beshevliev's study were found in Pliska, the polity's capital, and the rest predominantly in nearby villages, where they were often reused as building material.⁴ Of those that can be dated to a specific reign, it is conventionally accepted that one of the inscriptions surrounding the carved horseman at Madara is the earliest as it mentions Tervel (c.700-21 or c.701-18).⁵ Beshevliev places another 28 inscriptions in the reign of Krum (c.803-14), and 20 in the reign of Omurtag (814-31).⁶ Three further inscriptions are dated to Malamir (831-6), and one to Persian (837-52).⁷ The vast majority of the inscriptions in Beshevliev's edition were made prior to Bulgaria's official conversion to Christianity in c.864. This collection of pre-conversion monuments remains essentially comprehensive, as no additional epigraphic evidence for the pre-864 period has come to light since Beshevliev's second edition (out of three) in 1979. Beshevliev also includes some inscriptions from the period after 864, but these shall not concern us here.⁸

All pre-conversion monuments are written in Greek, apart from two in Turkic using Greek letters.⁹ Beshevliev's generally accepted taxonomy of the monuments divides them into: *res gestae*, triumphal inscriptions, peace treaties, military inscriptions, building inscriptions, and commemorative inscriptions.

4 U. Fiedler, "Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region: A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence and of the State of Current Research" in *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*, eds. F. Curta and R. Kovalev (Leiden, 2007), pp. 189-94.

5 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, Madara Horseman, nr. 1, pp. 89-108.

6 Ibid. Krum: nr. 2, pp. 108-15; nr. 3, pp. 115-21; nr. 5, pp. 122-3; nr. 16-40, pp. 141-51; possibly nr. 41 pp. 152-63; possibly nr. 47 pp. 173-80. Omurtag: nr. 43, pp. 165-9; nr. 56-7, pp. 192-209; nr. 59-68, pp. 212-23.

7 Ibid. Malamir: nr. 13, pp. 127-32; nr. 58, pp. 209-11; nr.69, pp. 223-5. Persian: nr.14, p. 132-9.

8 There is one inscription dated per reign for Boris, Symeon, and Peter, but recent work has shown these to be a far from comprehensive sample of post-conversion epigraphy in Bulgaria. For more recent epigraphic surveys see the work of Kazimir Popkonstantinov, e.g. "Greek Inscriptions from Ninth-Tenth Century Bulgaria: A Case Study in Byzantine Epigraphy," in *Inscriptions in Byzantium and Beyond. Methods - Projects - Case Studies*, ed. A. Rhoby (Vienna, 2015); K. Popkonstantinov and A. Totomanova, *Epokhata na Bulgarskiia tsar Samuil. Ezik i pismenost* (Sofia, 2014); the earlier work of Dimitar Ovcharov, e.g.: "Novi epigrafski pametnitsi ot Preslav," *Pliska-Preslav*, 1 (1979).

9 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, Runic: nr. 53-4, pp. 186-90.

This structure remains useful, although, as I hope to show, none of these labels should be used too rigidly.

2 Text, Object, Audiences

As the main native written source for pre-Christian Bulgaria, the inscriptions described above have been the subject of a considerable amount of historical study, and as some of the few monuments bearing middle Byzantine vernacular Greek and Balkan Turkic, they also have been the subject of philological study.¹⁰ The former, which concerns us here, has largely sought to extract historical data from the textual information the inscriptions carry, whether that is to cross-reference with Greek chronicles generally, or more specifically, to assist excavations or to offer insight into aristocratic titles in early medieval Bulgaria.¹¹ The vast majority of this work has focused on what the inscriptions say, and in doing so, their material manifestation has rarely been considered as an active agent in the formation of their meaning.¹² Here, as elsewhere, ‘inscriptions have tended to be treated as collections of words, whose materiality is incidental.’¹³

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- 10 Philology was perhaps Beshevliev’s primary concern too, but other studies include: G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (2nd ed. Chichester, 2014) p. 325; K. Kostova, “Ritmichni strukturi v Prabulgarski nadpisi na Grutski Ezik,” *Bulgarski Ezik* (1992); A. Granberg, “On Deciphering Mediaeval Runic Scripts from the Balkans,” in *Kulturnite tekstove na minaloto. Nositeli, simvoli, idei. Materiali ot iubileinata nauchna konferenciia v chest na 60-godishninata na prof. d.i.nr. Kazimir Popkonstantinov. Veliko Tŕrnovo, 29–31 Oktomvri 2003*, ed. V. Guzelev (Sofia, 2005).
- 11 Use alongside Greek sources has been, understandably, most common, started by Beshevliev himself, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, pp. 178–80. Some examples of their use alongside archaeology are found in Henning’s volume as a whole, but especially: J. Henning, T. Balabanov, et al. “Khan Omurtag’s Stone Palace of AD 822: A ‘Modernized’ Eighth-Century Fort,” in *Millennium Studies: Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, Volume 2: Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans*, ed. J. Henning (Berlin, 2007). The other major body of work has focused on the inscriptions’ text as a source for Bulgarian aristocratic structures and state organization more broadly, e.g.: T. Stepanov, “The Bulgarian Title ΚΑΝΑΣΥΒΙΓΓΙ: Reconstructing the Notions of Divine Kingship in Bulgaria, AD 822–36,” *Early Medieval Europe* (2001); F. Curta, “Qagan, Khan or King? Power in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Seventh to Ninth Century),” *Viator* (2006); A. Granberg, “Shift of Written Language and Alphabet.”
- 12 Perhaps the closest attempt to do both: F. Curta, “Gift Giving and Violence in Bulgaria and Poland,” in *Consensus or Violence? Cohesive forces in Early and High Medieval Societies*, eds. S. Mozdioch and P. Wisznerowski (Wrocklaw, 2013).
- 13 A. Eastmond, “Introduction,” in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. A. Eastmond (Cambridge, 2015), p. 2.

But a sensitivity to materiality in the study of inscriptions is extremely important, and not simply because the jargon seems modish. Rather, human experience is communicated through its material manifestations, and even belief systems, or religions, which seek to ‘separate the apparent and material from the real’ have used material culture ‘as the means of expressing this conviction.’¹⁴ There is no way of separating the text from the material medium that shapes and controls it.¹⁵ Or, in other words, the message or messages of any inscription cannot be understood simply by extracting the text, as this message was only ever communicated to its historical viewers and readers through both text and object.

At times the medium chosen could even be a ‘more powerful means of articulation’ than the written text it contains.¹⁶ This could be when the text itself is un-readable, as Guy Rogers has shown with his study of the inscription of Caius Vibius Salutaris of Ephesus, a wealthy Roman magistrate who inscribed his donations in seven documents (568 lines), in small (1-4 cm) letters on the marble wall of the theatre well above human eye level.¹⁷ Or it could be when the text itself is not really text, as demonstrated by Alicia Walker in her study of Pseudo-Arabic inscriptions at Hosios Loukas as well as by the commonly used Pseudo-Kufic decorations on Byzantine marble.¹⁸ Studies of inscribed text require an attentiveness to meaning generated not simply by the text itself, but also by the shape of the script, its size and legibility, in addition to attentiveness to the experience of viewing this text, the size and function of the stone it is found on, the depth of its carving, the location of text on the stone and the location of the stone itself.

Only half of the process of generating meanings and establishing the roles inscribed monuments played in communities can be ascribed to their manifestation as both text and material. The other half of the process is found in the roles of the audiences of the textual monuments. In understanding the

14 D. Miller, ed. *Materiality* (London, 2005), p. 2.

15 See for instance: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man: The Medium is the Message* (London, 1987), p. 194.

16 J. Huskinson, *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (London, 2000), p. 50. I am very grateful to Ida Toth for pointing me to this reference.

17 G. Rogers, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesus: Foundation Myths of a Roman City* (London, 1991), pp. 41–3.

18 A. Walker, “Pseudo-Arabic “inscriptions” and the Pilgrim’s Path at Hosios Loukas,” in Eastmond, *Viewing Inscriptions*, pp. 99–123; some Pseudo-Kufic decorations were exhibited at the Hermitage’s *Byzantium Through the Ages* exhibition in September 2016, see for instance the back cover of the catalogue: Y. Pyiatnitsky, *Izskusstvo divnoi krasoty i dukhovnosti* (St Petersburg, 2016).

process of meaning creation more fully, therefore, a sensitive approach to the multiplicity of audiences to any monument is required, and this is found lacking in much of the scholarship on the early Bulgarian inscriptions. Scholars too often allow for one main, chosen or intended audience for the monuments, which are themselves often categorized as a coherent propaganda project.¹⁹ Uwe Fiedler, for instance, concludes the inscriptions were ‘meant to impress Byzantine envoys’ as we can ‘safely assume the vast majority of the Bulgar population was illiterate.’²⁰ But texts were not only seen by those for whom they were made, and they may well have been made with a number of audiences in mind. Medieval literacy was a ‘sliding scale’ and thus each person’s individual degree of knowledge would have meant different levels of access to the information conveyed.²¹ The role of the textual community as a whole could plausibly allow for the transmission of text via orality, like public readings or rituals, even to those who could not read at all.²² And finally, text, written or inscribed, even when incomprehensible, could convey symbolic meaning to an illiterate viewer.

The ‘message’ of inscribed monuments, therefore, as intended by the agent(s) which made them or had them made, can only be understood in the synthesis between text and object. Additionally, the roles these monuments served in the communities within which they were created were forged both by these initial intention(s) or ‘messages,’ but also by how the range of intended and unintended, or considered and unconsidered, audiences ultimately received or engaged with these messages. Although surviving evidence rarely offers the medieval historian a full stratification of these varied intentions and audiences, it is important to have such a framework in mind, so that the narrowness of evidence does not lead us toward assuming that medieval societies were in any way simple. It is with these considerations in mind that the chapter shall address, in turn, the – arguably – oldest textual monument in early medieval Bulgaria, the Madara Horseman, and then triumphal inscriptions under Krum, arguing in both instances that their roles and their audiences were broader and more varied than has been allowed for thus far, and thus that they can reveal more about early medieval Bulgarian society than previously assumed.

19 For instance: M. Kaimakova, *Vlast i istoriia v srednovekovna Bulgariia VII–XIV vek.* (Sofia, 2011), pp. 102–6; Fiedler, “Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region,” pp. 189–94.

20 Fiedler, “Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region,” p. 191.

21 Eastmond, “Introduction,” p. 5.

22 For the intimate relationship between the oral and written see: B. Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia, 1990), esp. pp. 142–50.

3 Emergence of Writing and the Madara Horseman

As I suggested above, understanding the messages and audiences of textual monuments requires consideration of their material medium. To understand what the medium of inscribed stone may have signified, it is important to understand how exposed the Bulgarian polity was to inscribed monuments prior to starting to inscribe its own, and how significant that exposure seems to have been.

Varied earlier Greek inscriptions are found in north-eastern Bulgaria. Nonetheless, Georgi Mihailov's catalogue of inscribed texts found in the Bulgarian lands from the 6th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D. and Beshevliev's equivalent, mostly for the late antique period (c.4-7th century), demonstrate that although there were inscriptions in the core area of settlement of the Early Bulgarian polity, these were scarce in comparison to the rest of the region.²³ Beshevliev's catalogue of late antique inscriptions contains a total of 259 inscriptions or fragments, of which 97 come from the north-east of Bulgaria, including the coastal area.²⁴ Most of these are small fragments. The largest body is of 50 Christian commemorative inscriptions found in Odessos (Varna) on the Black Sea, which the Bulgarian commemorative equivalents under Omurtag do not emulate in content or style.²⁵ There are 15 fragments in Pliska, but none are particularly long and they may have been brought there after Krum.²⁶ The case for continuity of the Greek epigraphic tradition or its central significance in the core regions of early medieval Bulgarian society therefore appears weak.

Although categorized in terms familiar to the scholar of Byzantine or Roman epigraphy, the contents of the pre-conversion inscriptions – whether commemorative, triumphal, or peace treaties – have no inscribed contemporary

23 For instance, Mihailov's study of ancient inscriptions finds over 2,000 monuments to the south of the Haemus, and a mere 531 for all of the north. For the north-east, where the first Bulgarian polity settled, the figure is a mere 111 monuments. See: G. Mihailov, ed., *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae, Volumen 11: Inscriptiones Inter Danubium et Haemum Repertae* (Sofia, 1958), pp. 161–207; M. Slavova, *Phonology of the Greek Inscriptions in Bulgaria* (Stuttgart, 2004), p. 13.

24 V. Beshevliev, ed., *Spätgriechische und Spätlateinische inschriften aus Bulgarien* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 35–101.

25 On Omurtag's commemorative inscriptions see: Curta, "Gift Giving and Violence"; I. Andreev, "Oshte vednuzh za t.nar. 'Hraneni Hora' v Purvobulgarskite Nadpisi" in *Studia Protobulgarica et Medievalia Europensia: V chest na professor Veselin Beshevliev*, eds. V. Guizelev et al. (Veliko Turnovo, 1993).

26 Beshevliev, *Spätgriechische*, pp. 42–7; Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, pp. 174–9.

Byzantine parallels.²⁷ Further, many of the inscriptions, including those around the Madara Horseman, are too long to have been drafted on stone. One peace treaty fragment notes it was written ἐν τ(οὺς) χαρτάς.²⁸ The original treaty, therefore, was probably on parchment, and a number of seals of the early Bulgarian rulers demonstrate the presence of parchment literacy.²⁹ It follows that the choice to inscribe in pre-Christian Bulgaria is not reducible simply to continuation of a dominant tradition found in the material surroundings, nor to the absence of alternative methods of recording. The logical place to start in seeking to understand what roles inscribed texts played, therefore, is the monument deemed by most as the earliest, and usually dated to c.704-5.³⁰

The Madara Horseman is a rock relief of a horseman (2.72 m long, 2.65 m tall) in motion followed by a dog, and most probably stabbing a lion.³¹ It is located roughly 13 km south of the Pliska Palace, and found 23 m above the ground on the cliff face of a rock formation c.100 m tall.³² The horseman is surrounded by inscriptions, two immediately to his left (I a and b) and right (I c), and two below him also to the left (II a-c) and right (III).³³ The inscriptions around the horseman (I a, b and c) discuss events in Tervel's reign. The ones on the left (I a and b) mention an emperor Justinian and the inscription on the right of the horseman mentions Tervel by name, making it most likely that Justinian II is meant on the left.³⁴ The inscription to the left below the horseman mentions a *Kroumesios*, which could be Krum or Kormesios (Tervel's successor), and that to the right mentions Omurtag (c.814-30).³⁵

As noted above, historiography on the inscriptions as a whole has focused on extracting historical information, over and above understanding the message

27 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, pp. 80–5; R. Rashev, *Bulgarskata ezicheska kultura VII–IX vek*, (Sofia, 2006), p. 236.

28 The peace treaty fragment is extremely damaged, so it may not be from Krum's reign. The ἐν τ[οὺς] χαρτάς is the only text in that line, so it is out of context. Ibid, nr. 43, pp. 165–6. For the term's use in Theophanes' *Chronographia* and Nikephoras' *Short History* see: Ibid. pp. 165–9; Granberg, "Shift of Written Language and Alphabet," p. 54.

29 For a collection of seals: I. Iurkova, ed., *Bulgarski srednovekovni pechati i moneti* (Sofia, 1990).

30 Beshevliev, *Purbovulgarski nadpisi*, nr. 1, pp. 89–108.

31 Ibid. For an alternative reading of the lion: P. Georgiev, *Madarskiiat konnik: opit za vuskresenie* (Sofia, 2011).

32 Ibid.; Rashev, *Bulgarskata ezicheska kultura*, p. 132.

33 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, pp. 91–3; G. Feher, *Madarskiiat konnik – Pogrebalnite obichai na prabulgarite* (Sofia, 1926), p. 82.

34 'Ὁ Ἰου(σ)τινιαν(ο)ς ὁ βασιλ(ε)υ(σ)ς' and 'Ὁ Τερβελις ὁ ἄρχο(ν)' Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, p. 91.

35 'Ὁ Κρουμεις(ὸ) ἄ(ρ)χ(ο)ν' and 'Ὁ Ομ(ου)ρταγ ἄρχο(ν)' Ibid. pp. 93, 92 (respectively).

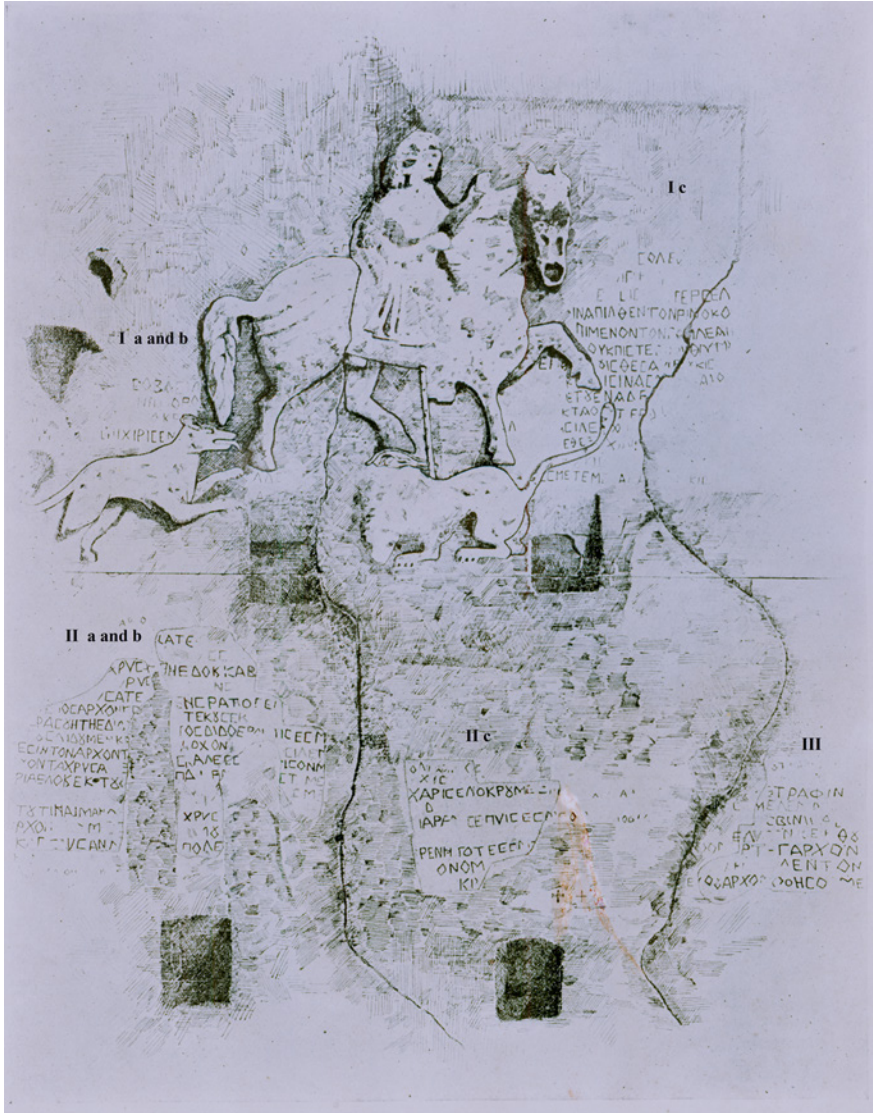


FIGURE 11.1 The Madara Horseman with inscriptions. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM FIEDLER (2007), AFTER FEHER (1926). LABELS OF INSCRIPTIONS AUTHOR'S OWN ADDITIONS.

and audiences of the texts within their communities. In the case of the text around the horseman, this has tended to mean accepting the inscriptions as dating to the reign of the person they mention as a given and overwhelmingly

focusing on debates around the origins of the horseman.³⁶ Beshevliev opted for Tervel himself as the rider depicted and as the source of the first inscription and Kormesios, his successor, as the source of the second, responding to Feher's 1926 claim that the horseman may be Krum's grave, which was broadly accepted in the 1930s when Beshevliev was writing.³⁷ This has largely remained unquestioned.³⁸ Despite its regular reproduction, it is far from clear that this is the most persuasive argument.

In the chronology proposed by Beshevliev, writing on stone first started under Tervel, but he only ever produced one inscribed monument. It continued under his successor Kormesios, who produced another singular inscription. It was then 100 years until the Bulgarian polity inscribed again at all, under Krum, and around the Madara Horseman under Omurtag. But this sort of gap is not necessarily clear in the palaeography of the text, and is made even less likely given what is known about Tervel, both of which suggest a later dating of the monument.

No thorough paleographical study has been conducted on the Madara Inscriptions since the 1956 volume edited by Beshevliev himself, which did little to question the by-then established dating of the editor.³⁹ Further, because of the soft cliff it is carved on, the conditions of the relief have deteriorated, leaving little (if any) possibility for further discovery from the relief itself.⁴⁰ Yet, upon examination, the best existing images of the inscriptions do not exhibit fundamental differences in style between the texts about Tervel, *Kroumesios*, and Omurtag. Rasho Rashev has even gone so far as to suggest that

36 On the horseman, Thracian, Bulgar, or other see: I. Venedikov, "Mozhe li Madarskiiat konnik da bude izobrazhenie na trakiiski Heros" in *Madarskiiat konnik (prouchvaniia vurhy nadpisite i relefa)*, ed. V. Beshevliev (Sofia, 1956), pp. 117–22; T. Stepanov, "Madara i Skalniya Relef (po povod na stari i novi rakusi kum problema)," in *Izsledvaniia po balgarska sred-novekovna arkeologiya. Sbornik v chest na prof. Rasho Rashev*, ed. P. Georgiev (Sofia, 2007), pp. 44–53; E. Stateva, "Madarskiiat konnik, ili za bulgarskiia "nov Herakul,"" *Istorichesko Budeshte*, (2010) p. 137.

37 Ibid. pp. 98–108; Feher, *Madarskiiat konnik*, pp. 12–23.

38 Beshevliev's dating is not questioned: V. Antonova, *Madara: putevoditel* (Sofia, 1977), pp. 10–5; Curta, "Quagan, Khan or King?," p. 30; Stateva, "Madarskiiat konnik," p. 141; G. Prinzing, "Pliska in View of Protobulgarian inscriptions and Byzantine written sources," in *Millennium Studies: Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, Volume 2: Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans*, ed. J. Henning (Berlin, 2007), p. 241; P. Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, 775–831* (Brill, 2012), p. 72, p. 228; V. Velkov, "Iztoriia na izuchvaniyata na madarskite nadpisi," in Beshevliev, *Madarskiiat konnik*, p. 13.

39 Ibid.

40 T. Totev, "K voprosu o proishozhdenii i smisle madarskogo gorelefa," *Antichnaia drevnost' i srednie veka* (2002), p. 66.

the similarity in the style of the most common letters (A, O, E) is consistent enough throughout the monument so as to indicate not that they were made at different times, but rather that they were made by different scribes.⁴¹ When considered alongside the fact that, as Beshevliev himself acknowledges, the textual style of the Madara letters is closer to that of other monuments discussing events in Krum's reign than any of the other pre – or post-conversion texts, the early 9th century appears as a more likely period of creation.⁴²

Additionally, the texts of the Madara cliff are most similar to inscriptions under Krum in more than letters. The inscriptions around the horseman record historical events in a narrative format not dissimilar from a chronicle, which is only elsewhere found in the *res gestae* discussing Krum's captures of Serdica and Adrianople, his encounter with Phokas on the battlefield, and in the lengthiest peace treaty, also datable to Krum's reign.⁴³ That is to say, their text is not inherently referent to the location or object upon which they are inscribed, like a commemorative inscription upon a grave or dedicatory inscription on a building may be.

In terms of what is known about Tervel, the only surviving object (a lead seal found in Constantinople) which is identifiably his gives some additional weight to a 9th century reading. The inscription regarding Tervel refers to him as *archon* rather than as the *Caesar* which is the title he uses on his own seal.⁴⁴ It is unlikely that if he had the monument made he would have omitted the title he was given in the very circumstances the monument relates. Thus, it appears more plausible that the Madara Horseman as a monument was begun under Krum rather than over a century earlier – and, in addition, that the contributions of Krum and Omurtag do date to their respective reigns. The fact that their reigns spanned a mere 30 years makes the possibility of the same scribe, or same set of scribal conventions, most readily justifiable.

The model outlined above allows for further exploration. In order to begin to understand the role of the inscriptions around the horseman and those of triumphal battles and fortresses, it is essential to consider their material

41 Rashev, *Bulgarskata ezicheska kultura*, p. 214.

42 Beshevliev notes that the style of the 'oldest inscriptions' differs significantly from those of Omurtag, Malamir, Boris, and Symeon (all of whom have a distinct style), but in the 'oldest inscriptions' he groups Madara with texts about Krum's reign (*res gestae*, no. 1): *Ibid.* p. 37; and the oldest inscriptions: nr. 1, pp. 98–198; nr. 2, p. 108–15 – which specifically notes the name 'ο Κρο[ῦ]μος' in line 35.

43 That is *res gestae* no. 2 and no. 3, and the peace treaty no. 41 in *ibid.* For what is still the major study of the peace treaty see: J. B. Bury, "The Bulgarian Peace Treaty of 814 and the Great Fence of Thrace," *English Historical Review* (1919), pp. 276–87.

44 Iurukova, *Bulgarski Srednovekovni Pechati i Moneti*, p. 16–7.

presence and position. In particular, although the fact that the lengthy inscriptions around the Madara Horseman are found 23 m above ground has been often noted, it remains sparsely explored.⁴⁵ As most of the images used when studying it have been taken from a platform erected to view the horseman more closely, it remains unobserved (to my knowledge) that the actual text remains barely visible from the ground, and certainly illegible to the regular passer-by – and, further, that the often-noted grandeur of the monument is significantly diminished in the context of the 100 m tall cliff on which it sits.

The text, therefore, was not intended to be readily readable. And, although it is difficult to tell how visible the text must have been originally from its current condition, it may be that it was not meant to be seen by those who did not know where to look. As such it is worth considering the carving of the horse (whether Bulgar or not) to have served as a guide to finding the text on the large cliff-face.

A certain level of privacy is also suggested by the location of the Madara cliffs, found roughly 13 km from Pliska. The area immediately around the inscribed monument has been subject to much archaeological dispute.⁴⁶ The site was clearly abandoned by the 7th century. The resettlement is difficult to date, but even when it occurred, it seems to have been limited to a few buildings (roughly four according to Rashev's survey).⁴⁷ The closest building to the Horseman has been identified as a palace, a pagan temple turned into a Bulgarian church, or a late antique church turned into a Bulgarian pagan temple.⁴⁸ Whether church, temple or palace, the settlement was never fortified and seems to have played no major role as an urban centre. The most likely reading seems to be that the area was closely connected to the political centre, and as such the monument's viewing audience would not be incidental.

The monument's location and intended privacy is perhaps best explained by the kind of information the texts, albeit fragmented, reveal. Krum's *res gestae* found in Pliska note his conquests and the murder of Nikephoras, while the text about Kroumesis (II a-c) (whether about Krum or not) to the left of the horseman opens with fragments of an agreement possibly from the emperor

45 For instance: Velkov, "Iztoriia na izuchvaniata na madarskite nadpisi." p. 5; but questioned briefly in: Curta, "Qagan, Khan or King?," p. 13.

46 The bulk of disputes and evidence are summarized in Rashev, *Buglarskata ezicheska kultura*, pp. 132–40; for individual books published during the excavations see the series of the Archaeological Museum, esp: R. Popov, ed., *Madara: razkopki i prouchvaniya, kniga 2, Izdaniya na Narodniya Arheologicheski Muzei*, 33 (Sofia, 1932), and the *Madara* journal for more recent work.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid. pp. 134; Balabanov, "Razkopki v Madara prez 1982-1985g.," *Madara*, 111, pp. 127–42.

to give something every year ('σου ἢ τη ἐδί(δουν κατ' ἔ)τος διδο ἐβοήθισες μ(έ)'), but ends in fragments of collapse of agreements ('ἔλυσαν') and possibly war ('πολε(μος?)).⁴⁹ So too the texts about Tervel (I a-c) discuss the pact made with Justinian II ('πάκτ(α) ἐπιχίρισεν').⁵⁰ Although the surviving text does not mention it (it is possible the part of the text now destroyed did), this pact too fell apart, according to Theophanes' *Chronographia*.⁵¹

Given its location, both on the cliff and geographically, and the fact it seems unlikely that the ruling elite would want a chronology of their failed treaties to be publicly available, the monument of the Horseman emerges as a private monumental archive for a ruling group. As such, it bound together various rulers by describing events of their rule in immediate proximity to one another.

If made under Krum, the monumental archive begs the question of where the information about the reign of Tervel, over a hundred years ago, was sourced. As noted above, the text calls Tervel *archon* rather than *Caesar*. Tervel's title *Caesar* is also omitted in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, which simply notes that, regaining his throne, Justinian 'after giving many gifts and imperial vessels to Terbelis, dismissed him in peace.'⁵²

Further, as Florin Curta notes, the Madara monument uses specific vocabulary, calling Justinian II 'slit-nosed' ('τὸν ῥινοκοπιμένον τὸν βασιλέαν').⁵³ While Curta concludes therefore that the text was formulated by Tervel for a Byzantine audience, I would suggest that it is far more probable that the text was taken from a Greek source, perhaps the same used later by Theophanes (given the omission of the awarding of the title). It seems unlikely that the ruling group of the first Bulgarian polity lost the information of their own predecessor becoming *Caesar* but kept the memory of an offensive name given to Justinian II in both Theophanes and Nikephoras' histories.⁵⁴

This points to an absence of a narrative historical tradition in the early Bulgarian polity prior to Krum, or at least the loss of such a tradition and the disruption of institutional memory at some point between the reigns of Tervel and

49 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, nr. 3, p. 122; nr. 1 p. 54.

50 Ibid. p. 53.

51 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, p. 525.

52 Ibid, p. 523.

53 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, nr. 1, p. 91; Curta, "Qagan, Khan or King?" p. 13.

54 'ὡς εὕρισκεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ἐκδεδομένων τύπων τῷ β' ἔτει τῆς ἐσχάτης βασιλείας τοῦ αὐτοῦ ῥινοκοπιμένου 'Ιουστινιανοῦ' Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. De Boor, 2 vols, (Leipzig, 1883–5) 316, 28–30; 'ἐτυφλώθη ὑπὸ 'Ιουστινιανοῦ τοῦ ῥινοκοπιμένου. ο' Κύρος πρεσβύτερος καὶ μοναχὸς ἀπὸ τῆς νήσου Ἀμάστριδος ἔτη ζ' Nikephoras, *Short History*, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880) 119, 8.

Krum. This makes good sense in the 8th century, as painted by Theophanes, when the ‘Bulgarians rose up and killed their lords.’⁵⁵ The 760s saw the murder of Vineh, and conflict between three other rulers, Teletz, Sabin, and Pagan, of whom almost nothing is known.⁵⁶ It is unclear from the Greek sources whether it is possible to speak of a single coherent Bulgarian polity at all at this time.

The only native historical source (aside from the inscriptions) which has been dated prior to conversion is the *Immennik* (Name List) of the Bulgarian khans, which only survives in three 15-16th century Russian copies in Slavonic.⁵⁷ Its authenticity has been doubted, but even accepting it as an authentic 8th century source does little to contradict the absence of narrative history in 8th century Bulgaria. The text itself is no more than a list of rulers, the length of their reigns and their family. Additionally, it offers a different chronology of the post-Tervel rulers of 8th century Bulgaria to Theophanes, and cuts off at a khan named Umor who is estimated to have ruled for no more than 40 days amidst the 760s disruptions (c.766).⁵⁸ This too affirms the hypothesis of a disruption in institutional memory.

It seems very likely, in this context, that the monument of inscriptions around the Madara Horseman, as well as a private archive for a ruling elite, also reveals an attempt to rescue and re-construct the narrative history of Krum’s predecessors from someone else’s story, i.e. the Byzantines. As such, the monument’s material manifestation exhibits some mediators of this Greek story, or some assertions of local agency. These are both textual – like the alteration of the narrative voice to include personal pronouns (‘ὁ θεῖν μου’), and material – namely, narrating in stone (a method of public acclamation in Byzantium) and yet not clearly for a ‘public.’⁵⁹

The Madara Horseman, it can be concluded, was a project about control in the Bulgarian polity. It was about control over institutional memory (or the construction of one), but also control over who did and did not have access to this information 30 m above ground. Given the privacy of the location of the monument, it is fair to assume that whatever way of reaching the monument

55 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, trans. Mango, p. 599.

56 Ibid. pp. 599–603.

57 *Immennik na Bulgarskite Khanove*, ed. I. Boganov (Sofia, 1981), p. 21; and a more recent edition: S. Chureshki, *Immennik na Bulgarskite Knyaze (Hanove)* (Sofia, 2012).

58 Ibid. p. 27.

59 Also possibly ‘μετ’ ἐμ[ε κ’] ἀλα [εν]ηκισ[ε]ν,’ Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, nr. 1, p. 91. For imperial Byzantine inscriptions as public and normative see for instance: M. Jankowiak, “Displaying Authority in a Changing World” in the forthcoming proceedings of the 49th Symposium of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, eds. I. Toth and M. Lauxtermann, *Inscribing Texts in Byzantium*.

there was (perhaps the construction of a temporary platform), access to its texts up close would have been restricted by those who had the power to inscribe them in the first place. The very act of inscribing such a text in such a place was essential to the formation of the power of those ruling the first Bulgarian polity in the 9th century, not simply to its communication.

4 'Triumph' and Text

The Horseman monument, rescuing the distant past of the Bulgarian polity, exists in stark contrast to the triumphal inscriptions of Krum. The corpus of 24, which survives mostly in fragments rather than full columns, is strikingly paleographically consistent. The letters are mostly c.0.08-0.11 m tall, and styles of individual letters (e.g. A, E, and Σ) are consistent across the board.⁶⁰ Their contents are also formulaic – they open either with a battle ('πόλεμος') or fortress/city ('κάστρον') followed by the name of the fortress or location of the battle.⁶¹ (Fig. 11.2-11.3) Some open with a cross, but this is not consistently catalogued and I have not had access to all stones so cannot speculate on whether this was a later addition to them or not. Although they do not mention Krum, Theophanes confirms some of these as Krum's conquests, like Mesembria which Krum stood against with some sort of siege machinery in 812.⁶² Another inscription discussing Krum's conquests in narrative also refers to cities he conquered as 'κάστρον'.⁶³

All the inscriptions were found either in the ruins of Pliska, or very nearby reused in Ottoman cemeteries or villages.⁶⁴ Despite the controversial state of archaeological research in Pliska, it is clear that major building works had taken place in the first quarter of the 9th century, including some major fortification lines, even if similar things cannot be said with certainty for the late 7th and early 8th century.⁶⁵ It seems most likely therefore that the monuments

60 Ibid., nr. 16–40, pp. 141–51; Rashev, *Bulgarskata Ezicheska Kultira*, p. 231.

61 On the *kastron* as administrative unit: A. Dunn, "Stages of Transition from the Late Antique to the Middle Byzantine Urban Centre in S. Macedonia and S. Thrace," in *Αφιέρωμα στον Ν.Γ.Λ. Hammond* (Thessaloniki, 1997), pp. 137–15.

62 Ibid. p. 147; 'μεσούντος δὲ τοῦ Ὀκτωβρίου μηνὸς παρετάξατο ὁ Κροῦμμος κατὰ Μεσημβρίας ἐν μηχανήμασι μαγγανι κῶν καὶ ἐλεπόλεων' Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. De Boor, 498.4–5.

63 Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi* (1979) nr. 2, pp. 108–9.

64 Ibid. found in a cemetery: nr. 25, p. 145; nr. 32, p. 148; found in the village Izbul: nr. 30, p. 147.

65 J. Henning, T. Balabanov, et al. "Khan Omurtag's stone palace of AD 822," p. 433; Fiedler, "Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region," p. 173; D. Ziemann, "Pliska and Preslav: Bulgarian Capitals between Relocation and Invention"; G. Nikolov and A. Nikolov eds., *Bălgarsko srednovekovie: obshchestvo, vlast, istoriia. Sbornik v chest na prof. d-r Miliiana Kaimakamova*



FIGURE 11.2. Triumphal Inscription of Krum, N. 21: 'Καστρον Διδυμοτυχου' (Beshevliev, 1979), National Archaeology Museum, Sofia.
AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPH.



FIGURE 11.3. Triumphal Inscription of Krum, N. 26: 'Καστρον Αρκαδι[ουπολεως]' (Beshevliev, 1979), National Archaeological Museum, Sofia.
AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPH.

originally sat in Pliska, rather than that they were brought from outside. The fact they are on columns of similar diameter (c.0.45-0.50 m) strongly suggests

(Sofia, 2013), p. 171; V. Guzelev, "Otnovo za stolitsite na srednoviekovna Bulgaria/niakoi novi gledishta i hipotezi" in *Studia Protobulgarica et medievalia europensia. V chest na profesor Veselin Beshevliev* eds. V. Guzelev, V. Tupkova-Zaimova, et al. (Veliko Turnovo, 1993), pp. 3–13; S. Valkinov, "Pliska, Preslav, Madara: razkopki i prouchvaniya," *Pliska-Preslav*, 1 (1979).



FIGURE 11.4

Triumphal Inscription of Krum, N. 16: Πολεμος της ξερας' (Beshevliev, 1979), National Archaeology Museum, Sofia. 3.15 m tall without the top stone found in others, the original was at least c.3.30 m tall.

AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPH.

they were a part of some sort of architectural structure, possibly Krum's palace.⁶⁶

Unlike the Horseman, at around the third meter of each column, these inscriptions were easily visible to the by passer (Fig. 11.4). As such, they were quite clearly intended to be seen. In light of this, what is perhaps most striking about the triumphal inscriptions is just how little triumph there is in each. The inscriptions do not say that the battles were successful, nor that the fortresses were captured. They do not include a date, or the name of the enemy, i.e. the Byzantines. This is extremely important to their function in the early Bulgarian community.

Firstly, the lack of sentences and elaborate Greek vocabulary makes the fact they are in Greek alphabet of little consequence as a limiting factor to their potential audiences. Simon Franklin has shown that the labels on churches in the early Rus polity of Kiev remained in Greek long after the adoption of Slavonic, but these standard abbreviations (*MP ΘΥ*, *ΙΣ ΧΣ*) did not necessarily

66 On the palace: Fiedler, "Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region," pp. 175–80.

'say' what they meant in Greek.⁶⁷ They did not necessarily 'say' 'μήτηρ Θεοῦ' to the Rus viewer, but rather 'said' or signified *bogoroditsa* to their Slavic viewers.⁶⁸ It is not to stretch the analogy too far, to suggest that the two words of the triumphal inscriptions could 'mean' one thing in Greek, but also symbolize or 'say' another to non-Greek-reading viewers, even if this was by no means as ubiquitous or repetitive as the Greek religious abbreviations.

Thus, it only takes a limited number of bilingual Greek readers to orally expand the reach of the awareness that 'κάστρον' signified fortress, or its Turkic, Slavic, or other equivalent. Quite to the contrary to the Madara Horseman monument, it is difficult to believe that the multitude of two-word triumphal monuments, forming an essential part of a large, probably politically significant building, remained visible, accessible, and yet completely ignored and un-deciphered. The triumphal inscriptions therefore probably 'said' or 'signified' something to at least most of the people who saw them, even if that 'message' was not always the Greek words they bore.

Secondly, the absence of historical dating or attempted narration of historical events suggests these inscriptions serve a completely different function from both Madara and other inscriptions from Krum's reign. The *res gestae* N.2 in Beshevliev's study narrates Krum's successful capture of other cities ('κάστρον'), and the fleeing inhabitants of Serica, Develtus, and Adrianople.⁶⁹ The next inscription in the collection narrates the death of Nikephorus in another battle led by Krum.⁷⁰ The text of these *res gestae* is the text Beshevliev likens paleographically to that of Madara, and much like Madara, they tell stories. The triumphal inscriptions, however, are not intending to record or narrativize a distant past; they do not seek to inform those who know nothing. It seems more likely, therefore, that they were created during Krum's campaigns – updating on their progress. The scarcity of words (two per stone) was given meaning by existing, known, and immediate context. That they were short enough and not inscribed especially elaborately or deeply into the stones, to take little time to be made, assists such a reading.⁷¹

67 S. Franklin, "Byzantium and the Origins of Written Culture in Rus," in *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. C. Holmes and J. Waring (Leiden, 2002), pp. 192–3.

68 Ibid.

69 'κὲ ἐξήλ(θ)εν κὲ ἔδοκε(ν) αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός κὲ τόπ[ου]ς κὲ κάστροα ἐρήμοσεν (τ)άδε· τὴν Σερδικήν, τὴν Δεβελτόν, τὴν Κωνσταντήαν, τὴν (Βερς)ηνικίαν, Ἄδρηαν(οῦ)πολην' 'κὲ ἐξ(ή)λθεν ἐπὶ (αὐτὸν) ὁ ἄρχων ὁ Κρο[ῦ]μος', Beshevliev, *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, pp. 108–9.

70 'κ(ἔ) ἰσῖλθεν ὁ Νηκιφ(όρος) ἐκ πικρίας'... in lines 3–4 of fragment A, and then in fragment C 'ἀπέθαν(εν ὁ βα)σιλεὺς', Ibid. nr. 3, pp. 115–6.

71 See Fig. 11.2–11.3.

Further, of the 24, at least 12 mention places Beshevliev has identified. Placed on a map on the basis of these speculations (see Fig. 11.5), it is clear these places are neither nearby, nor all especially major cities. It seems highly unlikely that the average Pliska dweller would have known, for instance, where '(Βερς)ηνικίας' (Fig. 11.2, and n.10 on Fig. 11.5) is located. Thus, at least part of the audience of the inscriptions had a sense of their general symbolism through a mixture purely of oral transmission and the immediate context of war. But the specificity of location mentioned points to another group of those expected to see the inscriptions.

Much of the military elite would have probably participated in the frequent campaigns under Krum. In 808/9 alone, Krum is recorded to have attacked the army of Strymon, a Byzantine *theme* on the Aegean coast to the east of Thessaloniki, but before Easter the same year his attack upon Serdica, modern-day Sofia in central-western Bulgaria, is said to have killed 6,000 Byzantine soldiers.⁷² These large military operations seem to have been both frequent and geographically distant. The inscriptions record places from Serres, not far from Thessaloniki, all the way to Tekridag on the Sea of Marmara and Ticha

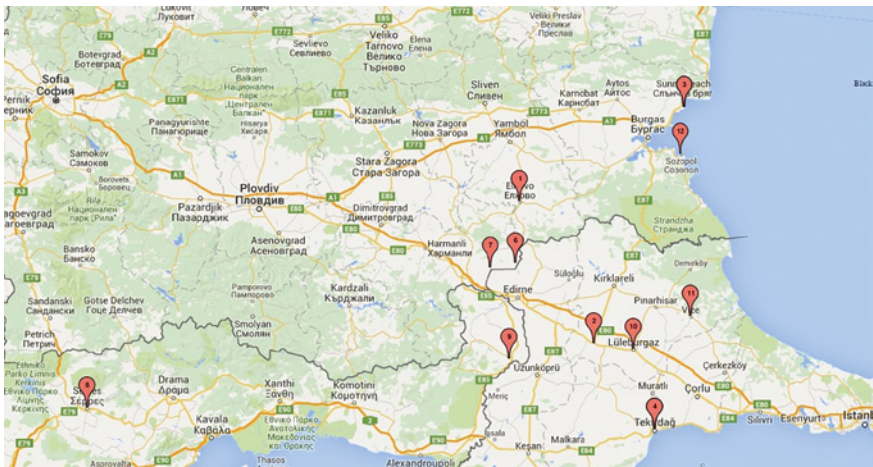


FIGURE 11.5 Map of places mentioned in the triumphal inscriptions of Krum. N.1 '(Βερς)ηνικίας' (N.16 in Beshevliev, 1979); N.2 'Βουρδίζου' (N.20 in *ibid.*); N.3 'Μεση[μβρίας' (N.29 in *ibid.*); N.4 'Ρεδεστου' (N.22 in *ibid.*); N.5 'Θεοδωρουπολεως' (N.23 and N.24 in *ibid.*); N.6 'Βουκελ[ου' (N.30 in *ibid.*); N.7 '[Σκουταριου' (N.31 in *ibid.*); N.8 'Σερας' (N.16 in *ibid.*); N.9 'Του[τρας' (N.18 in *ibid.*); N.10 'Διδυμοτχυου' (N.21 in *ibid.*); N.11 'Αρχαδι[ουπολεωσ' (N.26 in *ibid.*); N.12 'Σωζοπο[λεωσ' (N.27 in *ibid.*).

MAP DATA © 2018 GOOGLE.

72 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, p. 665.

not far from the Black Sea.⁷³ With this number of engagements in less than 15 years, it is unlikely everyone participated in each battle or siege. To the military leaders and soldiers, therefore, different monuments commemorating different sieges also commemorated the different men (and women?) who participated in them. One would most probably only know where '(Βερς)ηνικίας' is, if they had fought there themselves.

It is only within the immediate local audience that we can locate the role of Byzantine envoys, to whom much scholarship quickly reverts when considering the Greek-language monuments. The columns did speak a recognizable language to the Byzantines, both textually and materially (as columns), and they established political expansion claims. While the Madara monument, therefore, was looking backward to rescue the historical legitimacy of the Bulgarian polity, the 'triumphal columns' did much more than acclaim triumph. They communicated triumph, commemorated those who fought in battle, and looked forward, recording contemporary political battles and conquests which they claimed in stone as the future Bulgarian polity's possession.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to revisit inscriptions in early medieval Bulgaria not as pure sources for history or a corpus propagating a unified imperial project, but rather as material and textual objects which operated within complex communities, had a multitude of audiences and symbolized a variety of things to those audiences. Both the Madara Horseman and the triumphal inscriptions served a number of purposes in the early Bulgarian community. These were shaped by the monuments' size, position, language, and availability as well as their contents. I hope to have shown how a sensitivity to the material presence and agency of a textual monument could be utilized in the study of inscribed texts. Further, I have sought to demonstrate how texts written in the public space could both unite and create divisions within their varied audiences either through their location (like the Horseman), or through the level of prior knowledge their different audiences may have (like the triumphal inscriptions) – but also how these monuments were central to the self-construction, both past and future, of the Bulgarian polity under Krum and his officials after the disruptions of the late 8th century. All of this proves that written texts, and the early Bulgarian inscriptions created under Krum, in particular, did things *in* and *to* the communities they inhabited – they did not simply record them.

73 See Fig. 11.5 and Beshevliev's attempts to identify all locations at length in *Purvobulgarski nadpisi*, pp. 141–51.

The Emperor is for Turning: Alexios Komnenos, John the Oxite and the Persecution of Heretics

Jonas Nilsson

The reign of Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118) was a pivotal one in many respects. The sheer length of it, as well as the emperor's success in establishing a lasting dynasty, certainly broke the political trend of the tumultuous late 11th century, when only one of his six immediate predecessors had died in the purple. The Komnenian style of government, with its heavy emphasis on ties of kinship, appears to have constituted a definitive shift in the traditional relationship between the imperial family and the state, and the unprecedented response to the emperor's call for military aid from the West, resulting in the first crusade, must surely be regarded as a geo-political turning point.¹ Alexios' reign is, however, also noteworthy for the renewed imperial interest in the persecution of heretics.² Robert Browning has remarked that, at the time of the emperor's accession, there had scarcely been any trials for heresy since the middle of the 9th century, but Alexios broke this trend decisively by starting to haul heretics before the synod almost immediately after assuming power, resulting in a considerable number of convictions during his reign, as well as those of his successors.³ This is obviously something that requires an explanation.

In his influential study on the roughly contemporaneous revival of religious persecution in the West, R.I. Moore emphasized the political dimensions of these developments, which he essentially divided into two phases. He argues that accusations of heresy first arose in the 11th century as a sporadically employed way of attacking and discrediting political rivals, but that these practices were absorbed by the emerging bureaucratic state over the course of the 12th century, evolving from an occasional expedient for the consolidation of power into an institutionalized means of suppressing popular resistance and

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- 1 Peter Frankopan, "Kinship and the Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium," *English Historical Review* 495 (2007), pp. 1–8; Peter Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (London, 2012), pp. 87–117.
 - 2 Christine Caldwell Ames, *Medieval heresies: Christianity, Judaism and Islam* (Cambridge, 2015) p. 187.
 - 3 Robert Browning, "Enlightenment and Repression in Byzantium in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Past and Present* 69 (1975), p. 19.

legitimizing the new regime in church and state.⁴ Scholarship on the Komnenian programme of persecution has largely suggested similar interpretations of the corresponding developments in Byzantium, with the general view being that Alexios was simply trying to snuff out criticism against his rule. Browning views the renewed persecution as evidence of an ultimately successful attempt by the regime to silence the critical voices of educated men, since “those who have learnt from Aristotle to analyse and to compare, tend to do so just when those in power least want them to.”⁵ Dion Smythe appears to reason along the same lines, arguing that the emperor was not interested in heresy as heresy, but primarily as “a manifestation of opposition to be crushed; the heretics were an opposing voice, the removal of whom served to bolster the Komnenian regime.”⁶ Similarly, Michael Angold regards these trials as “a useful way of cowering political opponents and asserting authority in the streets and squares of Constantinople,” even though he also points out that “the Byzantine authorities were dealing with a real phenomenon.”⁷ This paper aims to challenge these views, arguing that Alexios was interested in heresy precisely as heresy, that persecutions were not intended to forcefully silence critics, but rather to win some of them over, and that the real turning point in this respect came in 1091.

What, then, happened in 1091? I believe that the key explanation for the Komnenian programme of persecution can be discerned in an oration by John the Oxite, titular patriarch of Antioch, that can be dated by internal evidence to that year. It is addressed to Alexios and there appears to be no reason to assume that it was not delivered on a public occasion in the presence of the emperor and his court. What makes it remarkable is that it deviates abruptly from the laudatory form of the conventional *basilikos logos* to offer instead damning criticism of the emperor’s policies. The patriarch is careful to avoid accusations of treason by affirming his personal loyalty to the emperor and expressing his firm belief that the future of the empire is dependent on his continuous rule, but he also states plainly that it is his obligation as a high priest of God to speak the truth and utter words that are useful rather than pleasing, even though he is aware that he may place himself in danger by doing so.⁸ As Peter Frankopan

4 R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford, 1987), esp. p. 130–46.

5 Browning, “Enlightenment and Repression,” pp. 3–4, 15–9.

6 Dion Smythe, “Alexios I and the heretics: the account of Anna Komnene’s *Alexiad*,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. Margaret Mullet and Dion Smythe (Belfast, 1996), p. 259.

7 Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 468.

8 John the Oxite, “Diatribes de Jean l’Oxite contre Alexis Ier Comnène,” ed. Paul Gautier, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 28 (1970), pp. 19–21.

has noted, the challenges to Alexios' rule escalated suddenly and sharply in the 1090s, when a lengthy series of plots came very close to depriving the emperor of his throne as well as his life.⁹ John's oration could thus be plausibly viewed as an expression of widely shared disaffection, which had been increasing throughout the 1080s and reached its peak after the war against the Pechenegs had spiralled out of control in the wake of the emperor's defeat at Dristra in 1086.¹⁰ Given this context, the sentiments expressed could probably be considered to reflect a general mood of disenchantment with the Komnenian regime, shared even by some of the members of the imperial family,¹¹ and not merely the personal views of the patriarch.

The main thrust of John's criticism and advice is reasonably straightforward. The situation was critical. Despite the emperor's relentless efforts and numerous military campaigns, virtually all of Asia Minor had been lost to the Turks. Cyprus and Crete had rebelled against imperial rule. The Balkans had suffered greatly from the Pechenegs, as they plundered cities, spilled Christian blood, and crushed the Byzantine armies at every turn. This leads him to the central theme of the oration, namely that it would be foolish to ascribe this catastrophic turn of events to the superiority of the empire's enemies, when it was clear that the defeats resulted from the deprivation of divine protection: God was obviously punishing the Christians for their sins. In evoking this notion of collective punishment the patriarch was, of course, connecting to a familiar theme in Byzantine religious discourse.¹² He contrasts the successes enjoyed by the emperor before he came to power with the constant stream of defeats that followed his accession and concludes that this must be taken as incontrovertible evidence that Alexios had angered God through his actions and that his only hope of regaining divine favour was to repent and make amends.¹³

He then proceeds to explain exactly how the emperor had sinned and what he could do to absolve himself, focusing mainly on two separate areas of criticism. The first one concerns the violent means by which he came to the throne, where his failure to prevent his victorious troops from plundering

9 Peter Frankopan, "Where Advice Meets Criticism in Eleventh Century Byzantium: Theophylact of Ohrid, John the Oxite and Their (Re)Presentations of the Emperor," *Al-Masaq* 20:1 (2008), pp. 84–5.

10 Peter Frankopan, "The Foreign Policy of the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–c.1100)," unpublished D.Phil thesis (Oxford University, 1998), pp. 200–18; Frankopan, *The First Crusade*, p. 37.

11 Frankopan, "Kinship," pp. 15–34; Frankopan, *The First Crusade*, pp. 71–86.

12 Peter Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *The English Historical Review* 88 (1973), pp. 23–4.

13 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," pp. 21–7, 35.

Constantinople was particularly jarring. Indeed, John does not hesitate to call it illegal (ἔκθεσμος), invoking the Norman invasion shortly after Alexios' accession as sure sign of God's displeasure, which should have prompted the emperor to do penance in complete humility and heartfelt contrition (μετανοεῖν ἐν πάσῃ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ συντριβῇ καρδίας).¹⁴ Instead, he claims, Alexios chose to do the exact opposite, trusting in stratagems and force of arms to repel the invaders, which predictably resulted only in defeat and great losses. The patriarch even goes so far as to claim that the invasion only failed because the Normans themselves suffered divine punishment for the atrocities they committed against Christians, thus removing all credit for their expulsion from Alexios.¹⁵ These claims stand in stark contrast to the account of Anna Komnene, and we shall have reason to consider this discrepancy in more detail below.

Secondly, he touches upon a line of criticism familiar from the *Epitome Historion* of John Zonaras, which was written more than half a century later, making severe accusations of nepotism and misappropriation of public resources.¹⁶ While Zonaras appears to be primarily concerned with abstract principles of government and the misfortunes of a disgruntled lower aristocracy excluded from the Komnenian family nexus, John the Oxite has a more common touch. He relates that the emperor's subjects are doubly afflicted by the current military crisis, since they are forced to endure not only the suffering caused by the marauding barbarians, but also the abuse of cruel magistrates and the oppressive taxation imposed upon them in order to finance Alexios' futile efforts to protect them. In addition to this injustice, the emperor has also had the audacity to despoil the holy churches, confiscating sacred items with the intention of turning them into *nomismata*.¹⁷ This is not, however, the principal point of John's criticism, for he admits that if there really had been no other way of maintaining the military capability of the empire, such measures might have been justified – but this is evidently not the case, the patriarch expounds, since the imperial family is living in utmost extravagance, constructing an abundance of richly embellished palaces, like cities within the city.

John tells Alexios plainly that his family has proved itself a blight on the empire and all its inhabitants (πρὸς λύπην μεγίστην καὶ τῇ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ἡμῖν πᾶσι τὸ συγγενές σοι κατέστη), since the emperor has allowed all its members to live

14 Frankopan argues, however, that the first Norman troops landed in Epirus as early as February 1081, a few months before Alexios' coup in April. See Frankopan, "The Foreign Policy," pp. 98–102.

15 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," p. 29.

16 John Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 18.29, ed. Ludwig Dindorf (Leipzig, 1871), pp. 258–60.

17 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," pp. 31–5.

as sumptuously as himself,¹⁸ while preferring to subject his more humble subjects to terrible hardships. Once again, the patriarch prescribes repentance and an immediate end to these unjust practices.¹⁹ As Frankopan has pointed out, there is a constructive element to this criticism, namely the implicit suggestion that Alexios could afford to end his oppressive policies, if he acted decisively to curb the excesses and ambition of his greedy relatives. Equally interesting is the observation that the emperor to some extent appears to have started applying some distance between himself and his relatives in the decades following the delivery of the speech, during which time the Komnenian family network is widened and some of the most influential individuals of the 1080s disappear from our sources.²⁰ This does not, of course, mean that it was specifically the words of John the Oxite that convinced the emperor to change his ways, but it would seem that the patriarch's admonitions at least did not fall on entirely unsympathetic ears.

There are, however, several other aspects of John's speech that provide us with valuable insights into the contemporary intellectual climate. First of all, it is important to note that he does not place the entire blame for Byzantium's misfortunes on the shoulders of the emperor and his family. When speaking about the cause of these calamities, he states that their entire generation had deviated from the righteous way (τὴν ἡμετέραν [...] γενεὰν τῆς μὲν δικαίας ἐκτραπέισαν ὁδοῦ), heading with full force towards the gulf of evil (ἔλθῃ δὲ ῥύμη φερομένην κατὰ τοῦ τῆς κακίας βαράθρου), for which reason God was trying to turn them back towards righteousness through chastisement and scourging (ἀνακαλεῖσθαι πειράσθαι καὶ οἷον ἀναχαιτίζειν παιδείαις καὶ μάστιξι), most notably by subjecting them to wars and the misfortunes that follow them (τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ μέντοι καὶ πολέμοις καὶ ταῖς ἐντεῦθεν συμφοραῖς). He claims that they all bear responsibility for this development, not only those who behave badly, but also those who stand beside and neglect to intervene (ὁ γὰρ ἐφησυχάζων τοῖς κακῶς πραττουμένοις, κωλύειν ἐξόν, οὐκ ἔλαττον τῶν <κακῶς> ποιοούντων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος). At one point, he concludes that the Byzantines would have had few enemies if they lived their lives in a manner befitting true Christians (εἶπερ ἐζῶμεν ζωὴν χριστιανοῖς πρέπουσαν, οὐ πολλοὺς ἐχθροὺς <ἂν> εἶχομεν) and seems to imply elsewhere that the entire people should join the emperor in atoning for their sins.²¹ Furthermore, the patriarch claims that there are many

18 See Frankopan, "Kinship," esp. pp. 8–14, adding considerable nuance to the notion that Alexios relied and based his authority exclusively on the support of his entire family.

19 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," pp. 41–3.

20 Frankopan, "Where Advice Meets Criticism," pp. 83–5, 87–8.

21 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," pp. 21, 45, 51.

who fail to acknowledge that the misfortunes they suffer are a divine punishment for their transgressions and thus stubbornly refuse to mend their ways, believing that God does not intervene in matters of the world, but only takes care of the salvation of their souls on the day of judgement, a notion dismissed in the speech as a perverse contradiction of scripture.²² John is consequently not presenting us with a situation where the unjust and arrogant behaviour of an emperor and his family has brought ruin upon the entire people, but rather one where widespread moral decadence has invited divine retribution and where the emperor's reluctance to repent and make amends for his personal sins has rendered him unable to avert it. This is obviously an important distinction. However, for the purposes of his speech, the patriarch explains, he must omit the faults of the many (τὰ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ἡμῖν ἕατα) to address only those of Alexios (ἐπὶ δὲ σὲ πορευτέον τῷ λόγῳ), who, after all, was the head of the body of the state (τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ τῆς πολιτείας πληρώματος).²³

These passages would, of course, also have the benefit of striking a reconciliatory tone that would serve to soften the harshness of the principal theme of the speech, but they should not be dismissed as pure rhetoric. Firstly, the version of events presented in them would be eminently logical from the Byzantine point of view, since the troubles now besetting the empire had started long before Alexios' accession, even though the situation appears to have deteriorated sharply during his reign and reached its most critical point around the time when John was delivering his speech.²⁴ The collapse of the empire's defensive capability and the drastic loss of territory since the battle of Manzikert was clearly the worst geopolitical disaster the Byzantines had suffered since the Arab expansion in the 7th century, and just as that calamity had prompted the widely accepted conclusion that the spiritual condition of the empire was fundamentally flawed, a development culminating with the introduction of iconoclasm as official dogma, the disastrous events of the 1070s and 1080s would reasonably have compelled contemporaries to seek explanations beyond the actions of individual emperors, as important as these may be in many respects.²⁵ Secondly, the sentiments expressed are supported by specific examples of widespread moral decadence, where the patriarch reserves especially severe criticism for the monastic and clerical communities, to both of which he belonged himself:

22 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," pp. 21–3.

23 John the Oxite, "Diatribes," p. 21.

24 Frankopan, "The Foreign Policy," pp. 253–6, 353–5.

25 Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," pp. 23–6.

We who are called to monasticism, crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts, prefer to live with them rather than with God. We the priests profane the sacred things, violate the law and trample holy canons under foot without restraint; there is no one to prevent or censure, but instead we consent to the evils of others and consider anyone wicked who does not agree with this.²⁶

It seems implausible that John the Oxite would employ such harsh words, even for purely rhetorical purposes, if they did not also strike a chord with contemporary opinion. As regards the concern for the declining quality of monastic life, Paul Magdalino has indeed identified similar tendencies in wider circles during the 12th century.²⁷ In light of this damning judgement on his peers, it is hardly surprising that the patriarch also encourages the emperor explicitly to take charge of the management of ecclesiastical matters and devote himself carefully to their improvement (ὡς ἄρα ἐμμελέστατά τε καὶ ἀκριβέστατα καὶ τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν φροντίσεις πραγμάτων), “for they are no less sick than the secular affairs” (οὐκ ἔλαττον τῶν κοσμικῶν ταῦτα νοσεῖ).²⁸ We may thus conclude that although it is clear that John considered Alexios’ unrepentant attitude and oppression of the poor to be his most pressing concerns, he also makes it quite clear that the correction of these transgressions, however important, would only be the first step towards restoring the empire to its proper state. Once the emperor had put his own affairs in order, he would need to address the wider cause of the misfortunes currently facing Byzantium. This desire for imperial leadership in spiritual matters is further emphasized by one of the historical anecdotes employed by the patriarch as models of proper imperial conduct, in which he recounts that when the Rus were threatening Constantinople in the reign of Michael III, the emperor and patriarch led the people in prayer and implored God to deliver them from danger, whereupon the sea suddenly erupted and destroyed the fleet of the barbarians.²⁹ The implication is clear: if Alexios could mend his ways and lead his people back to the path of righteousness, God would provide for the rest.

26 (ἡμεῖς οἱ μονάζειν ἐπαγγελλόμενοι καὶ τὴν σάρκα σταυροῦντες σὺν τοῖς παθήμασι καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τούτοις μᾶλλον ζῶμεν ἢ τῷ Θεῷ· οἱ ἱερεῖς βεβηλοῦμεν τὰ ἅγια καὶ ἀθετοῦμεν νόμον καὶ θείου κανόνας καταπατοῦμεν ἀνέδην καὶ ὁ κωλύσων ἢ μεμψόμενος οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ συνευδοκοῦμεν ταῖς ἀλλήλων κακίαις καὶ κακὸς ἐκεῖνος παρ’ ἡμῖν ὅς ἂν ἐπὶ τούτοις οὐ συμφροσῆ) John the Oxite, “Diatribes,” p. 45.

27 Paul Magdalino, “The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century,” in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London, 1981), pp. 54–60.

28 John the Oxite, “Diatribes,” p. 43.

29 John the Oxite, “Diatribes,” p. 39.

Alexios consequently found himself at a difficult juncture in 1091. He had assumed power as a military emperor, setting out to expel the barbarian invaders. That was the basis of his legitimacy as a ruler. In order to finance his campaigns, he had made himself unpopular by seizing church treasures and imposing heavy taxation, while at the same time allowing his relatives to live as kings. So far the results had been distinctly underwhelming and public opinion had deteriorated accordingly, to the point where a senior churchman found it prudent to criticize him openly. Would-be rebels were lurking all around him; power was slipping through his fingers. This demanded a response, and the energetic emperor was not found wanting. As has been noted above, he may have started to curb the worst excesses of his relatives, but since he could hardly afford to alienate the few loyal supporters of his rule, drastic measures were surely off the table. What he could do, however, was to seize upon the apparently widespread sense that the spiritual decadence of the empire was the root cause of its misfortunes and go along with the exhortations of John the Oxite to do something about it. This would deflect attention away from his failures and allow him to improve his public image by assuming the ever-popular role of defender of orthodoxy, buying him time to address the military crisis. I believe that this is where the heresy trials come in. We shall consequently proceed to test this hypothesis against the account of our main narrative source for the period, the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Since the chronology of the *Alexiad* is notoriously unreliable and Anna had every reason, given her panegyric ambitions, to present her father's struggles against heresy as a consistent concern rather than a desperate response to his military failures, we must pay particular attention to the question of dating the various heresy trials.³⁰

Let us begin with the first such trial recounted in the *Alexiad*, namely that of John Italos, datable from a patriarchal act and some versions of the *synodikon* of orthodoxy to 13 March 1082.³¹ As will be made clear below, I am inclined to view this as the exception among the heresy trials, an improvised reaction to an unexpected defeat rather than part of a carefully orchestrated programme of persecution. Anna Komnene relates that her father returned from his first campaign against the Normans, after having been soundly defeated by Robert Guiscard, to find the affairs of the church in disarray (*ἐν συγχύσει*), troubled by the teachings of Italos (*κυμαινομένην τοῖς τοῦ Ἰταλοῦ δόγμασι*). She then proceeds to give a detailed and markedly hostile description of the man and his background. Italos was of Italian origin and had arrived in Constantinople

30 Cf. Frankopan, "The Foreign Policy," pp. 16–7.

31 Jean Gouillard, ed., "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *Travaux et Memoires* 2 (1967), pp. 60 (n. 265), 190.

some time during or after the reign of Constantine Monomachos (r. 1042-55). After acquiring a rudimentary literary education, he came into contact with Michael Psellos, became his pupil and eventually, due to imperial patronage, his successor as “consul of the philosophers,” which was the position he held at the time of his trial. Anna presents us with an elaborate and damning portrayal of Italos, describing him as an arrogant and boorish man who failed to grasp both the profound truths of philosophy and the finer points of literary Greek, but who excelled at dialectic argument and managed to attract a great number of students, despite being unable to teach them anything of value. She accuses him of spreading doctrines alien to the church (ἔκφυλα τῆς ἐκκλησίας δόγματα) and describes his presence in the capital as troubling (θορύβων τὰ πάντα μεστὰ ποιούμενον) and corruptive (πολλοὺς ἐξαπατῶντα). Anna also claims that he had betrayed the Byzantine cause in the course of a diplomatic mission to the Normans during the reign of Michael VII. According to the *Alexiad*, the emperor first referred the philosopher for preliminary examination to his brother Isaac, who after examining his teachings committed him to appear before an ecclesiastical tribunal, where he was duly condemned and forced to recant his beliefs in public. Anna recounts briefly that he subsequently lapsed back into heresy and started preaching the same erroneous doctrines, for which he was punished by excommunication, although the penalty was moderated after he had repented a second time.³² In contrast to the account of the first condemnation, there appears to be no way of dating these events, nor indeed of corroborating Anna’s version of them. This is unfortunate, but it should also be noted that her brief account is silent on whether the emperor even chose to make the second condemnation a public spectacle. As such, it may well have been a minor affair of little relevance to the present argument.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the trial and public condemnation of John Italos were politically motivated. The emperor had just suffered a major defeat, the first of his military career, and the Normans were advancing over the Balkans towards Constantinople. Alexios could hardly have had time to entrench himself firmly on the throne and his credibility as a victorious military emperor had been damaged. In this situation, Italos would have been the ideal scapegoat. He was not only of Italian descent himself, but he could apparently also be accused of having betrayed his emperor to the Normans in the past. Moreover, he was a public figure whose teachings had been called into question once before, in 1077, when he could still rely on the protection of the Doukai, and Anna’s account of how an angry mob almost succeeded in lynching

32 Anna Komnene, *Alexias* 5.8-9, ed. Dieter R. Reinsch and Athanasios Kambylis (Berlin, 2001), pp. 161-7.

him during his trial indicates clearly that his condemnation and subsequent humiliation had popular appeal.³³ The procedures would thus have served to focus public fear and resentment on John Italos rather than on Alexios' inglorious defeat. It appears to have been, in Browning's words, the classical appeal to the silent majority.³⁴ Nevertheless, the question remains whether that was all it was. Could it also have been a warning to the emperor's domestic enemies and critics that dissent would not be tolerated?

This is indeed what Angold appears to imply when he points out that some of the philosopher's students belonged to the senatorial aristocracy associated with the civil service, stating, correctly, that members of this group would become some of the emperor's most bitter opponents, based on which he surmises that Alexios already had suspicions about their loyalty.³⁵ This line of reasoning is not implausible, but the positive evidence in support of it appears rather weak. It is true that Anna, when discussing Italos' inadequacy as a teacher, names John Solomon, who would later become the figurehead of the Anemas conspiracy, among those of the philosopher's students whose lack of intellectual qualities she could vouch for personally. However, in Anna's account of the conspiracy, Solomon is portrayed as a feeble character whose stupidity and cowardice ultimately enabled the emperor to uncover the plot and punish the ringleaders, which naturally is in perfect agreement with her earlier statements about his abilities.³⁶ It is therefore unlikely that Solomon would have been perceived as a threat in 1082 and the established connection between him and John Italos can consequently not be taken as evidence of any ulterior motives on Alexios' part to suppress dissent within the senatorial aristocracy. Furthermore, as has been noted above, Italos had built his career on the support of the Doukai, who, with the coronation of Eirene Doukaina, had tied their fortunes securely to those of the Komnenoi. Even if we account for the possibility of dissent within the family, it appears that Italos' principal patron was Andronikos Doukas, the largely innocuous younger brother of Michael VII, who, like Solomon, would be unlikely to constitute a threat to the regime.³⁷ It is thus improbable that the persecution of John Italos was carried out without the consent of at least John Doukas, and the fact that Alexios could count on the support of the philosopher's most prominent patrons would probably have made him even more tempting as a target.

33 Komnene, *Alexias* 5.9.6, p. 167; Browning, "Enlightenment and Repression," p. 13.

34 Browning, "Enlightenment and Repression," p. 14.

35 Angold, *Church and Society*, pp. 50–3.

36 Komnene, *Alexias* 5.9.2, 12.5.3–12.6.5, pp. 165, 371–5.

37 Demetrios I. Polemis, *The Doukai: a contribution to Byzantine prosopography* (London, 1968), pp. 45–7.

After the condemnation of Italos, the next heresy trial recounted in the *Alexiad* is that of Neilos, immediately followed by that of Theodore Blachermites. Neilos was a monk who appears to have acted as a wandering holy man and a self-appointed teacher. His errors were Christological in nature. Anna describes him as a flood of evil (τι ρεύμα κακίας) descending on the church and explains that his interpretation of scripture had gone astray (ἐπεπλάνητο περι τὸν νοῦν τῶν φραφῶν) due to his want of insight into the deeper meaning of the Bible as well as his lack of training in logic. She claims that he had managed to worm his way into several of the great houses of Constantinople (ἐν μεγάλαις οἰκίαις εἰσέδου), partly because of his apparent virtue and ascetic life, but also because of his supposed possession of secret knowledge. To make matters worse, Neilos is also accused of meeting with the leaders of the Armenian minority in Constantinople, whom he incited to further impiety with his teachings.³⁸ Anna proceeds to relate that when word of this new heresy reached the emperor, he reacted immediately by calling Neilos into his presence, whereupon he personally refuted his teachings and taught him clearly the true meaning of the hypostatic union of Christ, but as the heretic proved incorrigible, the emperor had no choice but to turn him over to the synod, which after examining his doctrines imposed an eternal anathema on him “in order to save the souls of many from his corrupt teaching” (ἵνα πολλῶν ἀπαλλάξῃ ψυχὰς τῆς διεφθαρμένης αὐτοῦ διδασχῆς).³⁹ On the heresy of Theodore Blachernites we are considerably less informed than we are about Neilos. Anna only informs us that Theodore, despite being an ordained priest, held views that were sacrilegious and contrary to church teaching (ἀσεβῆ καὶ ἔκφυλα τῆς ἐκκλησίας φρονῶν), associated with the so-called “enthusiasts” and, having partaken of their corruption (τῆς τούτων λύμης μετασχῶν), he deceived many (πολλοὺς τε ἐξαπατῶν), undermined several great houses in the capital (μεγάλας τῶν ἐν τῇ μεγαλοπόλει οἰκίας ὑπορύττων), and transmitted his evil dogma (παραδιδούς τὰ τῆς ἀσεβείας δόγματα). Like Neilos, he was summoned to the emperor, who instructed him personally on several occasions, but since he refused to change his ways, he too was bought before the synod and subjected to eternal anathema.⁴⁰

It should be noted that there are two interesting differences between Anna’s account of these two heresy trials and her account of the trial of John Italos. Firstly, Neilos and Theodore are portrayed as a threat to the spiritual health of a wide section of the populace, as a poison that needed to be drawn out of society before it could spread further, whereas the description of Italos focuses

38 Komnene, *Alexias* 10.1.1-5, pp. 281–2.

39 Komnene, *Alexias* 10.1.5, p. 282.

40 Komnene, *Alexias* 10.1.6, pp. 282–3.

primarily on his despicable character. We are told that both Neilos and Theodore had infiltrated several great houses in Constantinople and threatened to undermine them. The threat posed by them is magnified by their associations with larger heretical groups and emphasized by the statement that the condemnation of Neilos saved many souls from being corrupted by his teachings. By contrast, Anna is content to note in passing that Italos' presence was troubling and corruptive, and when discussing his disciples she seems more concerned for their lack of learning and intellectual ability than for the state of their immortal souls. Secondly, the role played by the emperor differs greatly between the episodes. Anna stresses Alexios' personal involvement in the affairs of Neilos and Theodore by recounting his studious attempts to teach them the true doctrine and his reluctance to put them on trial until he was absolutely convinced that they were incorrigible. In the account of the trial of Italos, however, the emperor has a much more peripheral role and seems to have little, if any, personal contact with the heretic throughout the process. It should also be pointed out that there appears to have been little reason for Anna to impose these differences in her narrative if they did not reflect the accounts provided by her sources or personal reminiscences.

In order to place the trials of Neilos and Theodore in their proper context, we must discuss their dating, a matter that has been subject to some debate. Basile Skoulatos has placed Alexios' initial action against Neilos in 1082–3 and his formal condemnation before the synod in 1087, to which year he also dates the trial of Theodore. The former date is based solely on a vague statement by Anna that Neilos appeared not long after the condemnation of Italos, which serves mainly to establish Alexios' apostolic work as an underlying theme of her narrative by connecting the separate episodes to each other, and thus cannot be taken at face value. The latter date, which also is the one preferred by Gouillard, appears to be based on an estimate made by Venance Grumel in his compilation of patriarchal acts.⁴¹ However, in the second edition of this compilation, the editor has re-dated the relevant entries to correspond with the chronology of the *Alexiad*. Moreover, he has done so without comment, which according to his preface should be interpreted as indicating that the original estimate was not supported by a substantial argument and that it has been made untenable due to the results of more recent studies.⁴² As the chronology of the *Alexiad* cannot be trusted and the trials are placed conveniently

41 Basile Skoulatos, *Les personnages byzantins de l'Alexiade: analyse prosopographique et synthèse* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1980), pp. 258f (n. 14), 294; Gouillard, "Le Synodikon," p. 184.

42 Venance Grumel, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, 7 fasc. (Paris, 1989), p. 3.425.

between the accounts of two rebellions against Alexios' rule, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the question remains an open one.

In attempting to answer it, we shall introduce another piece of evidence, namely the *basilikos logos* delivered by Theophylact of Ochrid to Alexios Komnenos in 1088.⁴³ When Theophylact praises the emperor's apostolic accomplishments, the only example he is able to provide is that Alexios had convinced an unspecified number of Turks, presumably recruits to his armies, to convert to Christianity. Not a word is said about any efforts to suppress heresy, which would have provided the archbishop with an excellent and quite obvious theme if the emperor had ensured the condemnation of two dangerous heretics by the synod less than a year earlier.⁴⁴ Since the errors of Neilos were included in the *synodikon* of orthodoxy, it is clear that it must have been an affair of some importance and not an insignificant event that was magnified by Anna Komnene in order to glorify the deeds of her father.⁴⁵ The most reasonable explanation for Theophylact's silence on the matter consequently appears to be that it had not yet taken place. Similarly, it seems unlikely that John the Oxite, who, as we have seen, implored the emperor to take precisely this kind of action in 1091, would have neglected to make a reference to the trials if they had taken place during the intervening three years. We consequently appear to arrive at a likely *terminus post quem* of 1091.

It is, however, significantly more troublesome to determine a *terminus ante quem*. Since Anna states that the patriarch presiding over the synod that condemned Neilos was Nicolas III, it is clear that it must have taken place before 1111, but this still leaves a rather wide timeframe. The trial is mentioned in a letter by Niketas of Heraclea, but it has been dated to the end of Alexios' reign and thus cannot be used to narrow the timeframe by itself.⁴⁶ Niketas does, however, appear to confirm that the trials of Italos, Neilos and Theodore took place in the order they appear in the *Alexiad*, which could imply that Anna generally places the trials in chronological order, meaning that the trials of Neilos and Theodore would predate that of the Bogomils, which, as we shall see, must have taken place before 1104. This is all, of course, quite circumstantial, and it does not by itself allow us to draw conclusions with certainty. Nevertheless, the trials of Neilos, a monk, and Theodore, an ordained priest, appear to correspond well to the exhortations of John the Oxite, who, as we

43 Theophylact of Ochrid, "Discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie," ed. Paul Gautier, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 20 (1962), p. 93–9.

44 Theophylact of Ochrid, "Discours," pp. 114–5.

45 Gouillard, "Le Synodikon," pp. 61–3.

46 Niketas of Heraclea, *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine*, ed. Jean Darrouzès, (Paris 1966), pp. 54, 304.

have seen, singles out the misdeeds of monks and priests as examples of the moral and spiritual decline that had brought God's punishment upon the empire. If Alexios wanted to show that he was serious about tackling the situation described in the speech, Neilos and Theodore would certainly have appeared to be suitable targets.

This brings us back to the discrepancy between John's criticism of Alexios' failure to do penance for his violent usurpation and the appearance in the *Alexiad* of an episode, placed immediately after the account of the emperor's accession, portraying him as doing precisely that. Anna Komnene relates that her father suffered agonies of remorse and grief beyond endurance (ἤνιάτο τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ κατεσπαράττετο καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν ὅ τι τῷ πλήθει τῆς λύπης χρήσαιτο), accepting the entire burden of guilt (ἐαυτῷ τὴν ἅπασαν προσάπτων αἰτίαν), even though, the faithful daughter reminds us, the real responsibility for his coup lay with the malevolent conspirators who had forced his hand. She proceeds to recount that Alexios for this reason summoned the patriarch and other prominent members of the synod and the monastic community, confessed everything in fear and faith (πάντα μετὰ φόβου καὶ πίστεως ἐξαγορευσάμενος), passionately demanding a remedy for his sins (τὴν θεραπείαν ἐξ ἐκείνων θερμῶς ἐξαιτεῖ), and subjected himself to the judgement of these honourable men (ἐπιτιμίους ἐαυτὸν καθυποβάλλων). They condemned both the emperor and his relatives to fasting, sleeping on the ground and performing the appropriate acts of penance, a punishment they all gladly accepted, with their wives joining them voluntarily and the emperor himself going even further by insisting on wearing sackcloth beneath the imperial purple and sleeping with a stone for a pillow for forty days.⁴⁷ The exuberance of Anna's account does have a suspicious ring to it and, in either case, it is clear that John the Oxite is the more reliable source here. If Alexios and his relatives had publicly submitted themselves to the judgement of the patriarch and done penance for the usurpation in the way that Anna claims, denying it in the presence of exactly those who had been involved would have served no other purpose than making the patriarch look foolish and spiteful, whereas Anna, who was writing more than half a century later, would have had every reason to move the episode to the beginning of her father's reign and claim that he had initiated the proceedings himself, if in fact repentance had been forced upon him more than a decade after his accession. The *porphyrogennita* may of course also have invented the whole episode. If not, we arrive once again at a *terminus post quem* of 1091.

These acts of penance can then also be related to the foundation, or re-foundation, of the *Orphanotropheion*, which Anna Komnene places shortly

47 Komnene, *Alexias* 3.5, pp. 97–100.

before her father's death, as one of his crowning achievements. Paul Magdalino has, however, dated it with considerable certainty to the first half of the 1090s by pointing out that it is mentioned in the *Life of St Cyril Phileotes* in the context of a visit that Alexios paid to a saint between 1091 and 1096. As Magdalino notes, this makes it plausible to see the great philanthropic deed as the work of penitence called for by John the Oxite.⁴⁸ We cannot, of course, assume that it was the exhortations of the patriarch specifically that inspired the emperor to action, but if we view the speech as an expression of the public opinion of the early 1090s, it would at least appear that the emperor was receptive to the criticism and willing to act upon it to a certain extent. For want of stronger evidence, we can consequently conclude that the concerns voiced by John the Oxite at the very least would constitute a plausible context for the trials of Neilos and Theodore. This seems to point us towards a synthesis, in which the Komnenian obsession with persecution of heretics can be seen as a reaction to the mounting discontent and military setbacks in the late 1080s and early 1090s and as an attempt to regain public support, divine favour or, most likely, both.

This brings us to the last of the emperor's heresy trials recounted in the *Alexiad*, namely that of the Bogomils. Anna writes that the dualist sect, referred to as a "cloud of heretics" (νέφος αίρετικῶν), had existed before Alexios' reign, escaping detection like a serpent lurking in its hole (ἐλάνθανε [...] ὡσπερ ὄφριν ἐξεκαλέσατο τῇ χειρῇ). They had spread their evil everywhere (ἐφήπλωσε τὴν κακίαν ἀπανταχοῦ) and like a raging fire it had consumed many souls (πολλὰς ψυχὰς δίκην πυρὸς ἐπενείματο τὸ κακόν): a terrible thing that had rooted itself even in the great houses and affected a large multitude of people (ἐνεβάθυνε τὸ κακὸν καὶ εἰς οἰκίας μεγίστας καὶ πολλοῦ πλήθους ἤψατο τὸ δεινόν). The Bogomils did not, however, escape the emperor's attention, and Anna relates that her father devised a plan to make their leader, a monk named Basil, reveal their doctrine. The heretic was invited to the palace to meet with the emperor and his brother Isaac, who flattered him and feigned interest in becoming his disciples, thus convincing him to disclose the tenets of the Bogomil faith, which were then written down by a secretary hidden behind a curtain. Once the heresy had been exposed, Alexios tried to convince Basil to abjure his wickedness, but after concluding that he was incorrigible, the Bogomils were hunted down and put on trial. Since many of the accused denied being members of the sect, the emperor contrived a ruse to separate the true Christians from the heretics. He lit two pyres, one with a cross beside it and one without, stating that all accused would be burned, but that each of them were allowed to choose which

48 Komnene, *Alexias* 15.7.2-9, pp. 481-5; Paul Magdalino, "Innovations in government," in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. Margaret Mullet and Dion Smythe (Belfast, 1996), pp. 157-8.

pyre to be burned at. The Christians thus chose the one with the cross and the Bogomils the one without, whereupon Alexios revealed his true intentions, imprisoned the heretics, and released the Christians after giving them useful advice on how to avoid getting into such trouble in the future. Only Basil was burned, since he was the leader and the most evil of all the Bogomils.⁴⁹

Although Anna places the episode at the very end of her narrative as another of Alexios' crowning achievements, it is evident from the active participation of the emperor's brother Isaac that it must have taken place before his death, which occurred no later than 1104, and most likely before his retirement to a monastery a few years earlier.⁵⁰ Based on this, the trial is often placed chronologically between the arrival of the first crusade in 1096 and the death or retirement of Isaac,⁵¹ but there appears to be no reason to exclude the possibility that it could have taken place even earlier. In fact, the most plausible principle for establishing a *terminus post quem* seems to be the same one as for the trials of Neilos and Theodore, which naturally brings us back to 1091. Zonaras places his account of the trial after his account of the first crusade, but since he in turn places both of these episodes before the foundation of the *Orphanotropheion*, which, as we have seen, predates the arrival of the first crusade, it is evident that his chronology is flawed.⁵² We are thus left with essentially two possibilities. The trial of the Bogomils must have occurred either before the first crusade, in which case it should be seen as part of the immediate theological response to the concerns voiced by John the Oxite as discussed above, or in the years around the turn of the century, in which case we should look for an event which could have given renewed impetus to the programme of religious persecution. In the latter scenario, such an event could probably be found in the breakdown of diplomatic relations between the Byzantines and the crusaders after Alexios had decided not to assist the Latins at Antioch in 1098, which seems to have effectively marked the end of Byzantine re-conquest in the wake of the crusade.⁵³ There is consequently no reason to prefer one scenario over the other, and both are consistent with the hypothesis presented above.

It should also be noted that Anna's account of the Bogomil trial, like that of the trials of Neilos and Theodore, displays certain characteristics that contrast with the episode dealing with the trial of Italos. We are told once again that

49 Komnene, *Alexias* 15.8.1-10.4, pp. 485-93.

50 Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 18.24, pp. 245-6; Angold, *Church and Society*, pp. 485-6.

51 Cf. Smythe, "Alexios I and the heretics," p. 236; Paul Gautier, "Les Synode des Blachernes (fin 1094): Étude prosopographique," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 29 (1971), pp. 224-5.

52 Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 18.23-4, pp. 242-4.

53 Komnene, *Alexias* 11.6-9, pp. 338-50; Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2003), pp. 69-71.

it had infested several great houses in Constantinople, and the danger posed to society as a whole is emphasized by the description of the sect as a secret society whose influence had spread everywhere, as well as through direct assertions that an enormous number of souls had already been devoured by their wickedness. The emperor's personal involvement is likewise stressed throughout the episode. It is Alexios who tricks Basil into revealing the Bogomil doctrine, who pleads with the heretic to make him change his ways, who devises the ruse to separate the true Christians from the Bogomils, and who gives useful spiritual advice to those Christians after their release. The emphasis on the danger posed to the spiritual health of the empire and the active part played by the emperor in eliminating it could in all likelihood be seen as a reflection of contemporary Komnenian propaganda, and the absence of these elements in the account of the trial of John Italos consequently serves to set it apart from the later trials.

1 Conclusion

Chronology is a vital element to any story, and it is surely no coincidence that Anna Komnene placed three of the four major heresy trials of her father's reign soon after his accession, conveying the impression that the preservation of orthodoxy was one of his immediate priorities, whereas the last one appears towards the very end of her *Alexiad* as one of his crowning achievements. In their attempts to discern a more cynical political agenda behind this encomiastic account of Alexios' pious persecutions, modern scholars have instead interpreted the emperor's urgent interest in suppressing heresy as a pretext for his efforts to stifle dissent, dispose of potential rivals and secure the position of his new regime. Through a careful examination of the available evidence, this article has sought to challenge this traditional dating of the trials, arguing that rather than being divided between the 1080s and 1110s, the main events associated with Alexios' religious persecutions actually seem to cluster in the 1090s. From this revised chronology, a different story emerges.

Instead of construing the heresy trials as a way of silencing the critics of the Komnenian regime, it seems plausible to view them as an attempt to win some of them over and present a constructive response to the concerns voiced by John the Oxite in his scolding oration from 1091. As such, the trial of John Italos, which remains firmly dated to 1082, stands out as an improvised and hasty attempt to divert attention from Alexios' unexpected defeat at the hands of Robert Guiscard, and it does not appear to have been followed up until the military defeats and mounting opposition of the late 1080s prompted the emperor to launch a programme of religious renewal as soon as the immediate

threat from the Pechenegs had been averted. This involved making amends for the violent circumstances of his accession, through the foundation of the *Orphanotropheion* and possibly through the acts of repentance described but misrepresented by Anna Komnene, as well as persecuting heretics such as Neilos, Theodore Blachernites, and the Bogomils as part of a carefully orchestrated programme intended to establish Alexios firmly as the undisputed and vigorous champion of orthodoxy.

This revised version of events underlines the differences rather than the similarities between the revival of persecution in the East and West respectively. Alexios' heresy trials do admittedly seem to have served the purpose of establishing legitimacy for a new regime and, it could be argued, to some extent for a new institutional order, which is also an important characteristic of the second phase of persecution described by Moore, but it is important to note that this need for legitimacy originated from very different circumstances. In the West, it was needed to justify the gradual suppression of communal independence by an emerging bureaucratic state.⁵⁴ In Byzantium, however, where the bureaucracy by western medieval standards was already fully developed, it arose in the specific context of the military crisis of the late 11th century. It was not the accession of a new dynasty that in itself provided the impetus for persecution, but the failure of a military emperor to repel the foreign invaders through stratagems and force of arms.

The tumultuous 11th century had witnessed many new regimes, but none of them appear to have taken much interest in religious persecution and, as we have seen, neither did Alexios himself before his lacklustre military performance became a serious threat to his legitimacy as emperor. The heresy trials and public acts of repentance would have served as potent propaganda for the Komnenian government, but it would be presumptuous to assume that the emperor was not also motivated by sincere piety. Indeed, he would have been a very unusual Byzantine if he did not see the workings of the divine behind the long series of reverses he had suffered after his accession. Also, the principle of acting in accordance with the established moral values of one's society has always been closely intertwined with the benefit of being commended for doing so, and there is not necessarily a need to see a contradiction between them. Regardless of his motives, however, it is clear that in taking these measures Alexios was aligning himself with a very traditional imperial ideal: orthodox in faith, victorious in war.

54 Moore, *The Formation*, esp. p. 130–46.

PART 4

Turning Points in Religious Landscapes



Eight Hundred Years of the Cult of the Archangels at Aphrodisias/Stauropolis: Modern and Ancient Narratives

Hugh Jeffery

In the 1st century A.D., St. Paul wrote to the fledgling Christian community at Kolossai, a small *polis* on the eastern slopes of Mt. Kadmos near the Maeander valley of western Asia Minor. The Apostle counselled against the veneration of ἄγγελοι, arguing that to do so would be to forfeit one's salvation.¹ It was precisely in this Maeander region that the late antique cult of the angels emerged from a nexus of vernacular religious beliefs and rituals. These practices could claim little Christian scriptural authorization, and were viewed with considerable suspicion by many ecclesiastical leaders on account of their potentially heterodox, Judaizing or pagan associations.² Nevertheless, the veneration of ἄγγελοι proved persistent enough to require the intervention of ecclesiastical authorities in order to bring the cult under the control of the Church.

This paper seeks to trace a local cult of the archangels Michael and Gabriel at the city of Aphrodisias in Karia from its origins in late antiquity through to the end of the Middle Byzantine period.³ Two principal arguments are outlined.

1 Col. 2:18.

2 The literature on angelology, especially its theological implications and origins in Second Temple Judaism, is vast. The emergence of angel cult in Asia Minor has been the subject of a number of recent studies. Ragnar Cline, *Ancient Angels: Conceptualizing Angeloi in the Roman Empire* (Boston, 2011) provides the most thorough account of the late Roman evidence. See also John Arnold, *The Footprints of Michael the Archangel: The Formation and Diffusion of a Sainly Cult, c. 300-c. 800* (New York, 2013). But the phenomenon has been noted since the early 20th century; Franz Cumont "Les Anges du paganisme," *Révue de l'histoire des religions* 12 (1915), 159–82; Frantizek Sokolowski, "Sur le culte d'Angelos dans le paganisme grec et romain," *The Harvard Theological Review* 53.4 (1960), 225–9; Anthony Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor," *Talanta* 12–3 (1980–1981), 77–101; Victor Saxer, "Jalons pour servir à l'histoire du culte de l'archange Saint Michel en Orient jusqu'à l'iconoclasme" in *Noscere Sancta: Miscellanea in Memoria di Agostino Amore*, ed. Isaac Vázquez Janeiro (Rome, 1985). For Christian angels in Late Antiquity see Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (New York, 2013).

3 I am currently in the process of writing a DPhil thesis on the archaeology and history of Middle Byzantine Aphrodisias. Many of the archaeological descriptions I provide here are

The first sets out a new interpretation of the conversion of the temple of Aphrodite into a large cathedral. The second part of the paper then assembles evidence both published and unpublished for the unbroken survival of this cult beyond the destructions of the 7th century into the Middle Byzantine period. Both the transformation of the temple and the various destruction layers dividing the medieval city from the classical paving stones below have been read as transformative archaeological events in city's history, the turning points of two well-established narratives.

The two narratives both concern discontinuity, and serve to distinguish between historical eras. The first situates the architectural transformation of the peristyle temple into an apsidal basilica within a long conflict between Christian and pagan factions. The second creates a fundamental discontinuity between the ancient city and the medieval town that was its successor. I want to suggest that a study of the veneration of archangels may open avenues through which to critique both.

A few clarifications are necessary with regards to terminology. I use "Aphrodisias" to refer to the classical and late antique settlement, "Stauropolis" for the medieval settlement and associated episcopal see, and "Aphrodisias" again for the modern archaeological site. The Greek "ἄγγελοι" is used to refer to intermediary celestial beings common to ancient thought, and "angel cult" to explicitly Christian practice under the supervision of the Church. I refer to the cathedral as the "cathedral", rather than the conventional "Temple-Church." I have decided to use "pagan" to describe both adherents to traditional public cults and vernacular practices of dubious orthodoxy, roughly therefore following the semantic range of the Greek Ἐλένης. "Pagan" was an artificial category through which Christian authorities imposed their dichotomies onto more nebulous and flexible patterns of religious practice in order to demarcate orthodox belief.⁴ If we keep this definition in mind, it is a term well suited for a paper the focus of which is the contested limits of this orthodoxy.

therefore either the product of personal observations in the field or the consultation of on-site indices and unpublished excavation journals. Where this is the case I have not provided references to the site's internal records. Unless otherwise stated, English translations of the Greek sources are my own. Biblical verses follow the King James edition.

4 Here following Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York, 2013); also see collected papers in Arietta Papaconstantinou ed. *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and beyond: Papers from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar* (Oxford, 2015).

1 Narrative 1: From Temple to Cathedral

Aphrodisias, christened Stauropolis in the 7th century, is located on the plain of the river Morsynos to the southwest of Mt. Kadmos.⁵

The profile of the mountain dominates the eastern horizon, and the temple of the city's eponymous goddess was aligned with its peak.⁶ This structure, comprising eight by thirteen Ionic columns surrounding a marble *cella*, was completed in the first half of the 1st century A.D. Little is known of its earlier phases, although foundation walls of a central *cella* uncovered in the 1960s demonstrate that the later temple retained the orientation of a Hellenistic predecessor. In late antiquity, the temple was transformed and enlarged into a cavernous cathedral.

The *cella* was entirely dismantled, and the columns of the east façade relocated to extend the structure's longitudinal east-west axis. The exterior columns of the pseudodipteral temple now divided the aisles from a central nave, and new exterior walls were constructed to the north and south. A narthex and atrium were added to the west at a later date. Two coins of Leo I (A.D. 457–474) from beneath the narthex foundation provide a *terminus post quem* for this modification.⁷ The cathedral was dedicated to the archangel Michael, or possibly Michael and Gabriel. That this was the case in the medieval period is clear from Niketas Choniates' description of the destruction of the building in the

5 A discussion of the likely date of the change in name can be found in John Nesbitt, "Byzantine Lead Seals from Aphrodisias," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983), 159–64. He suggests that the name quickly lost currency to "Karia," derived from the eponymous former Roman province. The latter is preferred by Choniates and has survived in the name of "Geyre" for the modern Turkish village. It is important to qualify Nesbitt's conclusion regarding the chronology of these three names. "Stauropolis" never seems to have found much use beyond official ecclesiastical documents and seals, and could still be employed in explicitly ecclesiastical contexts in the late 12th century; see William Bucker, "A Memento Of Stauropolis," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 28 (1928), 98–101.

6 For a study of the classical temple see Dinu Theodorescu, "Le temple d'Aphrodite" in Juliette de la Genière and Kenan Erim, eds. *Aphrodisias de Carie, Colloque de l'Université de Lille 111* (Paris, 1987), pp. 87–99.

7 Not, as previously published, for the conversion of the temple itself (As in p. 245 of Angelos Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Context" in *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, eds. Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter (Leiden, 2008). I am currently inclined to believe that the narthex, or at least its apsidal ends, is a Middle Byzantine feature of the cathedral. The exact chronology of the western portions of the building is currently under review by Jim Coulton, who is preparing a volume on the architecture of both the temple and cathedral.

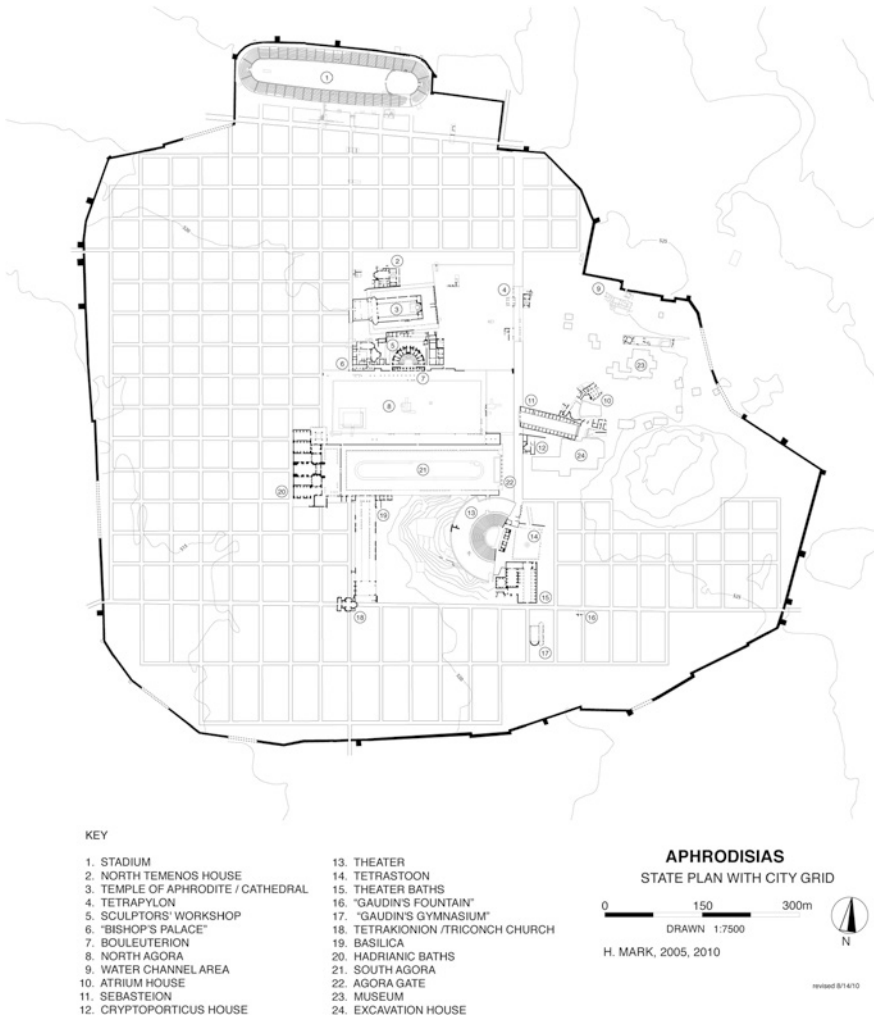


FIGURE 13.1 Aphrodisias city plan.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

early 1190s, and is heavily implied by the unique iconography of frescoes found in the corridor behind the *synthronon*.⁸ A considerable number of late antique

⁸ Niketas Choniates *Historia*, ed. Jan Louis van Dieten, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis* 11.1. (Berlin, 1975), p. 400: ἐμβαλῶν δὲ τῇ Καρία καὶ πολλοὺς προνομεύσας τῶν ἐκεῖ τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐκδέδωκεν εἰς ἀπαγωγὴν. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν νεῶν τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀνόσιος οὗτος διαφῆκεν ἐμπρῆσαι, ἔργον μέγιστον καὶ περίπυστον ὄντα καὶ ὑπερβαίνοντα ἐς κάλλος καὶ τὴν εἰς μῆκος ἕκτασιν τὸ ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι πόλει τοῦ καλλιμάρτυρος Μωκίου τέμενος. Note how Choniates comments on the length of the basilica, which suggests that he knew the building well. This is highly likely considering the proximity of Stauropolis to his hometown of

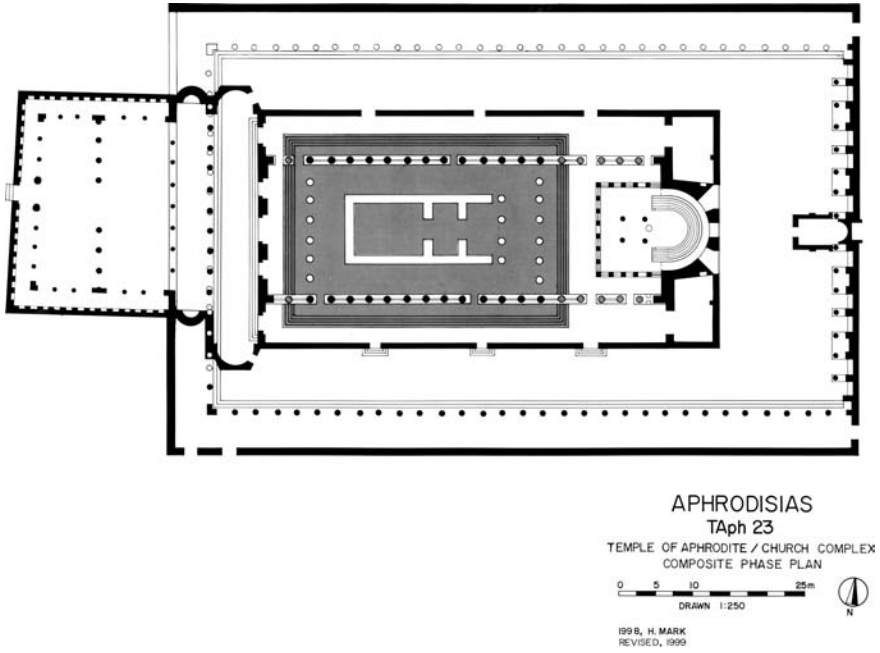


FIGURE 13.2 Temple of Aphrodite/Church Complex composite phase plan.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

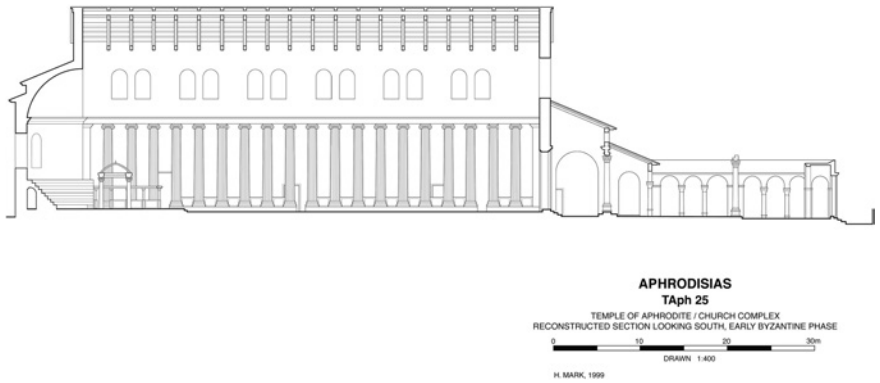


FIGURE 13.3 Temple of Aphrodite/Church Complex section reconstruction, c. AD 600.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

graffiti invoke Michael, and a reference to an archangel is found on a fragment of the balustrade of the late antique chancel screen.⁹

The conversion of the temple into the cathedral was described in a brief article by Robin Cormack in 1990 and was subsequently the subject of an unpublished PhD dissertation by Laura Hebert in 2000.¹⁰ Both situated the transformation within a narrative of contest for civic space and legitimacy between pagans and Christians lasting several centuries. The cathedral “conspicuously marked the coming of a new era” (Cormack), and “proclaimed loudly and clearly its victory over the old religion” (Hebert).¹¹ Pagan religious practice, in the form of late antique Neoplatonist philosophy, is well attested at Aphrodisias well into the 5th century. However, the latest secure evidence for a public cult of Aphrodite dates from late 3rd century.¹² Though there is plenty of evidence for a functioning philosophical school and private sacrifices in domestic settings, I would be hesitant to infer an interest in maintaining pagan civic ritual.¹³ Angelos Chaniotis has since provided a more nuanced evaluation of the religious context, proposing a triangular conflict between Christians, pagans, and the Jewish population of the city. His approach simultaneously emphasizes both extreme religious competition and ambiguity, describing a more dynamic and volatile framework of beliefs and institutions through which individuals might negotiate their relative positions. Particularly key here is Chaniotis’ aphorism that “religious ambiguity should be seen as a contemporary cultural phenomenon, not as a modern methodological problem.”¹⁴

Narrative is the central problem here – the attribution of historical meaning to particular archaeologically visible incidents through their employment in

Chonai. It is very difficult to infer any absolute chronology from Choniates’ narrative of Theodore Mankaphas’ polity over the years 1189–94, hence my imprecise dating of this event. I treat the synthronon frescoes below.

- 9 These are discussed in Robin Cormack, “The temple as the cathedral” in *Aphrodisias Papers: Recent Work on Architecture and Sculpture*, eds. Charlotte Roueché and Kenan Erim, *Journal of Roman Archaeology supplement* (Ann Arbor, 1990), pp. 75–88, p. 84; Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity the Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions* (London, 2004.) Available at <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/alaz2004/index.html>, Nos. 133, 94. Accessed 2018 May 20.
- 10 Robin Cormack, “The temple as the cathedral”; Laura Hebert, *The Temple-Church at Aphrodisias* (PhD dissertation: New York University, 2000).
- 11 Cormack “Temple as Cathedral,” p. 82; Hebert *Temple-Church*, pp. 12; 76.
- 12 Roueché *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, No. 148.
- 13 The ambitions of late antique pagans are not my subject here. It will suffice to note that recent reassessments have suggested these were much less belligerent than had previously been assumed. See for example Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York, 2013); Neil McLynn, “Pagans in a Christian Empire” in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, eds. Philip Rousseau and Jutta Raithel (Chichester, 2009).
- 14 Chaniotis, “The Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite,” p. 246.

sequential chains of events. Chaniotis hints towards this in his assessment of the conversion, briefly asking whether the event marked the end of a conflict, as was Cormack's hypothesis, or was instead the cause of conflict's eruption.¹⁵ Though it is tempting to construct a single interpretive narrative around the few archaeological events we have, a more useful analysis might begin with the recognition that the significance imported to these events is dependent upon their position within a narrative framework. Within a community, it is possible for the same event to be framed by many variant narratives, some of which may be contradictory. We should be open to the idea that competing narratives generating competing social memories may have existed simultaneously in late antique Aphrodisias. Phil Booth and Wendy Meyer have employed similar frameworks to explore spatially embedded but doctrinally contested Christian cults.¹⁶ Booth traces "simultaneous but divergent perspectives" in the miracles attributed to the 6th century shrine of Cosmas and Damian in Constantinople, while Meyer discusses how "conflicting religion-power discourses could appropriate the same building to promote differing messages" in contemporary Antioch.¹⁷

The alternative interpretation presented below ought not therefore to be considered necessarily incompatible with the Christian present/pagan past paradigm followed by Cormack and Hebert. The desecration of the Temple of Aphrodite may have been abhorrent to a traditionalist faction, and some Christian-identifying citizens might have found this highly satisfying. Others may have recognized the transformation as an act by which ecclesiastical authorities sought to establish control over heterodox popular worship of ἄγγελοι. My aims are to offer a further dimension of extra-ecclesiastical Christianity to Chaniotis' analysis of the religious environment, to spatially locate the conflict within the city's sacred topography, and hopefully to elucidate a neglected lens through which some members of the community likely chose to see the construction of the cathedral.

An examination of the mechanisms of the transformation reveals that one imperative for the architects was to incorporate a small well to the east of the temple into the new structure. This had been long been established within the sacred topography of the city. Hellenistic ceramic shards found at the bottom

15 Chaniotis, "The Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite," p. 245.

16 Phil Booth, "Orthodox and Heretic in the Early Byzantine Cult(s) of Saints Cosmas and Damian" in *An Age of Saints?: Power, Conflict, and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, eds. Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo, and Phil Booth (Leiden, 2011); Wendy Meyer, "Antioch and the Intersection between Religious Factionalism, Place and Power in Late Antiquity" in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, eds. Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (Farnham, 2009).

17 Booth "Orthodox and Heretic," p. 120; Meyer "Antioch," p. 366.



FIGURE 13.4

Wellhead in the east apse, polaroid 1985 excavation photograph.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

of the shaft suggest that it is one of the oldest features of the complex that included the temple of the city's patron goddess. That these reflect some ritual function is *a priori* likely considering that its source was a salt-water spring located within her *temenos* and only a few metres from the eastern steps of her temple. Moreover, Pausanias cites exactly this Aphrodisian well as an analogous example to the well of Poseidon in the Erechtheion at Athens, a comparison that makes little sense unless our well were also thought to be sacred.¹⁸

The well is currently to be found at the centre of the east apse of the cathedral. A re-used and hollowed-out column base serves as its head and it is surrounded by four bases for a *ciborium*. The floor level of the cathedral was similar to that of the temple *cella*, i.e. significantly higher than that of the surrounding *temenos*, and the well was located at this lower level to the east of the temple steps. The original student excavator assumed that the upper masonry courses of the well's interior were part of its original structure, leading to a fanciful image of a "chimney-like structure that rose high above the people", preceded by some kind of ladder or stairway for the pagan priests.¹⁹ A simpler explanation that accounts for the evidently late antique wellhead is that the shaft was vertically extended at the moment of the transformation of the temple in order for it to emerge at the appropriate floor level, and re-exposure of the exterior of the shaft in 1985 did in fact establish that the upper 1.35m were a late addition. The well in the east apse, surmounted by an elaborate *ciborium*, constituted the visual focus of the new building. The desire to incorporate it at this focal point within the structure seems therefore to have necessitated the project to lengthen the east-west axis of the temple by relocating its enormous columns and raising the eastern floor level.

18 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, Attica, xxvi. After describing the Athenian well Pausanias concludes that "τοῦτο μὲν θαύμα οὐ μέγα· καὶ γὰρ ὅσοι μεσόγαιαν οἰκοῦσιν, ἄλλοις τε ἔστι καὶ Καρσὶν Ἀφροδισιεύσιν."

19 The citation is taken directly from the excavator's notes in his field journal.

The full importance of this well has not yet been recognized. Cormack assumed that the cathedral east wall, which employs re-used classical maeander friezes on its exterior but is in fact of 5th century construction, dated to the same period as the temple. He then formed a somewhat teleological conclusion that the presence of this supposed earlier structure determined the dimensions of the later cathedral.²⁰ The location of the well in the east apse was therefore coincidence. Hebert acknowledged that the well must have played an important role in Christian cult practices and that it “governed the position of the sanctuary”, but implicitly suggested that it was neither the motivation for the act of transformation itself nor for the extraordinary expansion of the temple structure.²¹ I would like to suggest that it was almost certainly the cause of the latter. If it inspired the former, the perceived threat may have emerged not from Aphrodite but from anonymous and ill-defined ἄγγελοι.

The veneration of ἄγγελοι in late antiquity was far from an exclusively Christian phenomenon, as similar intermediary beings were central to both Jewish and pagan traditions. This is precisely the triangle of belief envisaged by Chaniotis for late antique Aphrodisias.²² Cline has shown how pagan ἄγγελοι were a common assumption of popular religious thought and not the preserve of educated Neoplatonist philosophers.²³ At Oenoanda, an inscription on the city’s walls preserves a response of the oracle of Apollo at Claros made in around A.D. 200. The question posed was “are you god? Or is someone else?”, to which Apollo replied that he and the Olympian gods were mere ἄγγελοι of one supreme deity.²⁴ A second inscription next to an altar carved in relief on the wall records a gift made to a Θεός Ὑψιστος. Cline argues that the Clarian oracle consistently advocated a henotheistic cosmology, influencing religious beliefs throughout the region. A group of 2nd century inscriptions from Stratonikea, later a suffragan see of Stauropolis, mention Zeus Hypsistos accompanied by a

20 Cormack, “Temple as Cathedral,” p. 82.

21 Hebert, *Temple-Church* (2002), p. 38.

22 *Supra*, No. 14.

23 Cline, *Ancient Angels*.

24 See Cline, *Ancient Angels*, p. 19, for a discussion of this inscription. The cult of Θεός Ὑψιστος and its henotheistic implications have attracted a considerable literature: Stephen Mitchell, “The cult of Theos Hypsistos between pagans, Jews, and Christians” in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, eds. Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford, 1990); Alf Thomas Kraabel, “Hypsistos and the Synagogue at Sardis,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 10 (1969), 81–93. The cult is attested at Aphrodisias. See Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, “Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias,” *Zeitschrift Der Savigny-Stiftung Für Rechtsgeschichte: Romanistische Abteilung* 106 (1989), 297–310. The Aphrodisian evidence is further discussed in Angelos Chaniotis, “The Jews of Aphrodisias: new evidence and old problems,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002), 606–11.

“good” or “divine” ἄγγελος.²⁵ The ἄγγελος here seems to serve as an intercessory being through which to approach the henotheistic deity. These pagan angel cults do not necessarily reflect any syncretism with Judeo-Christian traditions. Rather, a shared Greek language and culture enabled those from different religious traditions to express similar theological ideas using the common term.²⁶

There was no single cult of ἄγγελοι in the late Roman world – what we find is a complicated and fragmentary picture of distinctive local cults. This was exactly what made their incorporation into Christian theology and ecclesiastically sanctioned ritual practice so challenging, and why many sought to prohibit or curtail their invocation. The 5th century bishop Theodoret of Kyros was particularly belligerent in his attack on angel veneration. Commenting on Paul’s original condemnation of the practice in his epistle to the Kolossians, he noted that it was especially prevalent in southwest Asia Minor:

This disease remained for a long time in Phrygia and Pisidia. Indeed, because of this a synod convened in Phrygian Laodikeia forbade by law praying to angels; and even now shrines of the holy Michael are to be seen among them and those near them.²⁷

Theodoret does not dispute the existence of the angels or the sanctity of the archangel. He objects only to their being the object of misdirected prayer. Conscious of non-Christian conceptions of ἄγγελοι, he considered direct worship of such beings to be a pagan practice. This can most clearly be seen in his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, where immediately beneath the sub-heading *Περὶ ἀγγέλων* he acknowledges their prominence in the traditions of the poets and philosophers of the Hellenes.²⁸ Returning to the above quotation, Theodoret’s reference is to a Church council at Laodikeia on the Lykos, a city very close to Kolossai and Aphrodisias. It was probably held in the 360s.²⁹ Canon 35 forbade the formation of secret groups in order to invoke angels by name. Though many, including Theodoret, have assumed that this entailed a

25 Sheppard, “Pagan Cults,” p. 77; Mitchell, “Theos Hypsistos.”

26 Cline *Ancient Angels*, p. 75, following the theoretical model proposed in Glenn Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, 1999).

27 Theodoret *Interpretatio in xiv epistulas sancti Pauli*, PG 82.613; “Ἐμμενε δὲ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος ἐν τῇ Φρυγίᾳ καὶ Πισιδίᾳ μέχρι πολλοῦ. Οὐ δὴ χάριν καὶ συνελθοῦσα σύνοδος ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ τῆς Φρυγίας, νόμῳ κεκώλυκε τὸ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις προσεύχεσθαι· καὶ μέχρι δὲ τοῦ νῦν εὐκτῆρια τοῦ ἁγίου Μιχαὴλ παρ’ ἐκείνοις καὶ τοῖς ὁμόροις ἐκείνων ἔστιν ἰδεῖν. See Arnold, *Footprints*, p.61, for an analysis of the semantic range of πάθος in this context.

28 Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, PG 83.468.

29 Arnold *Footprints* p. 59.

comprehensive prohibition of angel veneration, recent reappraisals have suggested that the precise phrasing of this measure indicates that only subversive practices located outside Church authority were targeted.³⁰ Canon 36 forbids priests from using magic or creating phylacteries. The immediately subsequent canons are concerned with the attendance of Christians at feasts deemed from an ecclesiastical perspective to be Jewish or pagan, but which would probably have encompassed all traditional local festivals.³¹ Laodikeia therefore enacted a broad programme intended to curtail heterodox vernacular practices and to strengthen ecclesiastical control.

While he may have been mistaken regarding the degree to which the council had prohibited the invocation of ἄγγελοι, Theodoret was entirely correct in noting the extraordinary incidence of shrines to Michael in Asia Minor. The most famous of these was that at Kolossai, the exact same town whose proto-Christian citizens had received Paul's condemnation.³² The settlement was relocated in the 8th century and renamed Chonai, but the cult seems to date from at least as early as the 5th century. Its foundation legend is preserved in an 8th century text that combines two miracle stories. The first three chapters describe a miraculous healing at a local spring. A pagan from Laodikeia saw a vision of Michael, who instructed him to deliver his mute daughter to a place named Chairetopa in the region of Kolossai. Here he found people dousing their bodies in the water and calling upon Michael and the trinity. The water effects the miraculous cure and the pagan and his daughter are converted to Christianity. The subsequent eight chapters concern a hermit named Archippos who was supposedly persecuted by pagans attempting to destroy the holy spring by diverting rivers towards it. The archangel Michael saves the shrine and the hermit by opening chasms in the earth to drain these rivers. This provided an etiological explanation both for the name Chonai, which translates as funnels, and for a local topography noted by Strabo for its subterranean rivers and frequent earthquakes.³³

30 Arnold *Footprints* pp. 59–63; Cline *Ancient Angels* p. 138.

31 "Synod of Laodicea" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 14. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace eds. (New York, 1900). For the Greek see Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (Florence, 1759), Vol. 2, pp. 563–94.

32 The cult at Chonai has been studied in great detail. Cyril Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Δελτίον Τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας* 12 (1984), 39–62; Glenn Peers, "Holy Man, Supplicant, and Donor: On Representations of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae," *Mediaeval Studies* 59 (1997), 173–82; Arnold, *Footprints*, pp. 43–5. Also see PG 140.573–592 for the *Narratio Miraculorum Maximi Archangeli Michaelis*, a collection of miracles attributed to Michael by Pantaleon, a 9th century deacon of Hagia Sofia.

33 Strabo, *Geographicus* XII; Arnold, *Footprints*, p. 45.

The veneration of ἄγγελοι often manifested as healing cults around springs, wells and other sources of flowing water. The existence of such a cult in 1st century Jerusalem is attested in John's Gospel. The evangelist describes a pool named Bethesda:

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.³⁴

By the 5th century a church had been constructed above the pool.³⁵ In the later 4th century a public fountain house at Corinth collapsed, and for two centuries small lamps, some inscribed with dedications, were placed in the small grotto formed by its fallen architecture.³⁶ One of these invokes the “ἄγγελοι which live in these waters”, while another explicitly names Michael, Gabriel and the Θεον Σαβαοθ, a Hellenization of the Hebrew epithet for “Lord of [angelic] Hosts.”³⁷ At Germia in Galatia, a large basilica dedicated to Michael was constructed at the site of a thermal spring. Pilgrims afflicted with illnesses would descend into a pool in which fish would cleanse wounds of infection.³⁸ Niewöhner has dated the first phase of this structure to the middle of the 5th century through stylistic comparisons to the monastery of St. John of Studios in Constantinople.³⁹ A similar healing spring dedicated to Michael at Pythia, near modern Yalova, is described by Procopios.⁴⁰

The story about the pagan's conversion at Chonai, though evidently fictional, is revealing in that it assumes that non-Christians would understand the logic behind invoking ἄγγελοι at such healing sites. This was certainly the case at our last case study, a holy well at Mamre in the modern occupied Palestinian territories. The well was claimed to be the location at which the three angels

34 John 5:4.

35 Cline, *Ancient Angels*, p. 132.

36 David Jordan, “Inscribed Lamps from a Cult at Corinth in Late Antiquity,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 87/2 (1994), 223–9. Cline, *Ancient Angels*, pp. 118–9.

37 Jordan, “Inscribed Lamps,” Nos. 1 & 2. The inscription on Lamp 1 reads “ἄγγελοι κατοικοντ(ες) ἐπι τοις υδασιν τουτοις.”

38 Cyril Mango, “The Pilgrimage Centre of St. Michael at Germia,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 36 (1986), 117–32.

39 Philipp Niewöhner, “Die Michaelskirche in Germia (Galatien, Türkei): Ein kaiserlicher Wallfahrtsort und sein provinzielles Umfeld,” *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (2010), 137–60; “Bronze Age Hüyük, Iron Age Hill Top Forts, Roman Poleis, and Byzantine Pilgrimage in Germia and Its Vicinity: ‘Connectivity’ and a Lack of ‘Definite Places’ on the Central Anatolian High Plateau,” *Anatolian Studies* 63 (2013), 97–136.

40 Procopios, *Buildings*. V.3.20.

appeared to Abraham in Genesis, and was the site of a market and religious festival that attracted Christians, Jews and pagans.⁴¹ Eusebios claims that the emperor Constantine was horrified by the lack of clear distinction between Christian and pagan forms of worship at the site, and ordered the *comes* Acaicius to burn the idols and destroy the pagan altar.⁴² He subsequently had a basilica erected, but these efforts to control heterodox worship proved ineffective. Sozomen, a native of nearby Gaza writing shortly after A.D. 440, claims the festival remained popular with the “Hellenes on account of the presence of the ἄγγελοι”:⁴³

[Jews, Hellenes and Christians] each offer their appropriate form of worship at this place, some praying to the God of All, others invoking the ἄγγελοι and pouring wine and sacrificing incense, an ox, a ram, a sheep or a cock.⁴⁴

Cline draws attention to Sozomen’s use of a “ὅτι μὲν... ὅτι δὲ” construction, implying it was those who performed the pagan Hellenic rites who invoked ἄγγελοι, in opposition to the Christians who prayed to the God of All.⁴⁵ Excavation of the well in the 1920s revealed coins from the reign of Constantine and lamps of the 4th to 6th centuries. Some of these were imprinted with Christian designs, suggesting that Sozomen’s optimistically neat division between Christian prayer and pagan sacrifice was in reality heavily blurred.⁴⁶ Booth has noted that such ambiguous healing cults were frequently doctrinally polyphonous spaces.⁴⁷ The Miracles of Cosmas and Damian record instances in which pagans are cured at the saints’ Constantinopolitan shrine despite petitioning them as the twins Castor and Pollux.⁴⁸ Similarly, in the Miracles of Thecla, a pagan sophist upon receiving a cure alleges that the saint has performed the

41 Gen. 18:2. The well at Mamre is discussed in Cline, *Ancient Angels*, pp. 114–6.

42 Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.51–3.

43 Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.4.3, “Ἰουδαίους μὲν καθότι πατριάρχην ἀνχοῦσι τὸν Ἀβραάμ, Ἑλλῆσι δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐπιδημίαν τῶν ἀγγέλων, τοῖς δ’ αὖ Χριστιανοῖς ὅτι καὶ τότε ἐπεφάνη τῷ εὐσεβεῖ ἀνδρὶ ὁ χρόνος ὕστερον ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τοῦ ἀνθρωπέου γένους διὰ τῆς παρθένου φανερώς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιδείξας.”

44 Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.4.3 προσφόρως δὲ ταῖς θρησκείαις τιμῶσι τοῦτον τὸν χώρον, οἱ μὲν εὐχόμενοι τῷ πάντων θεῷ, οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἐπικαλούμενοι καὶ οἶνον σπένδοντες καὶ λίβανον θύοντες ἢ βοῦν ἢ τράγον ἢ πρόβατον ἢ ἄλεκτρούνα.

45 Cline, *Ancient Angels*, p. 114.

46 Cline, *Ancient Angels*, p. 116.

47 Booth, “Orthodox and Heretic,” p. 117.

48 Ludwig Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian: Texte und Einleitung* (Leipzig, 1907), Miracle 9.

act as an agent of the god Sarpedon.⁴⁹ The Orthodoxy of healing sites was a matter of constant negotiation.

Perhaps Constantine's mistake at Mamre was not to erect his basilica directly over the sacred well, thereby preventing all unauthorised access to its supernatural power. Let us review the Aphrodisian evidence in light of the above discussion. The columns of the west façade of the temple were moved in order to extend the structure to the east, so that a well with a long history as a local holy site might be incorporated at the focal point of the new cathedral. The shaft of the well was vertically extended to bring the opening to the level of the temple floor, and a new wellhead carved from an old column base. A ciborium was constructed directly above it, and the clergy took their seats on a synthronon that surrounded the well to the north, south and east. The cathedral was dedicated to the archangel Michael, and local people made appeals to the ἄγγελοι in graffiti etched onto its architectural sculpture. The cathedral fits perfectly the 5th century model of angel veneration attested across Asia Minor, with an unusual spring providing the focus for a healing cult. Where it is possible to determine the origin of these, we find that ecclesiastical authorities were forced to respond to the heterodox practices of vernacular communities. I believe it is therefore unlikely that angel worship at Aphrodisias was initiated through the construction of the cathedral, and more probable that the construction of the cathedral brought a pre-existing cult into an ecclesiastically sanctioned context.

2 A Counter-Narrative: Angels at the Theatre

Extra-liturgical worship of ἄγγελοι may well have continued throughout the city. Evidence for a more informal form of veneration was uncovered during the excavation of the theatre.⁵⁰ The corridor behind the classical *scaenae frons* had been significantly altered in late antiquity, with brick benches half a metre high installed around its edges and figural fresco decoration applied to the walls. The corridor was divided into a north and a south room. The decoration of the southern chamber was too poorly preserved to detect any iconographic scheme save for the faint outline of one standing figure possibly wearing a red

49 Gilbert Dagron ed., *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle: texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Brussels, 1978), pp. 396–08.

50 Robin Cormack, "The wall-painting of St. Michael in the theatre," in *Aphrodisias Papers 2: the theatre, a sculptor's workshop, philosophers, and coin-types*, eds. Roland Smith and Kenan Erim, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplemental Series* (Ann Arbor, 1991), pp. 109–22.

cloak. In the northern room, however, many fragments of figural decoration were uncovered and reassembled to reveal the face and left wing of an angelic figure, standing frontally, and a painted inscription in white majuscule letters reading "MIX[A]HA."⁵¹ The discovery of two near identical sandaled left feet and fragments of two distinct blue globes suggest that Michael was accompanied by another similar figure, presumably Gabriel.⁵² The frescoes, and therefore probably the conversion of the space, have been dated by Cormack to the 6th century.⁵³ The depiction of archangels with the iconographic accoutrements of secular power such as globes and scepters is well attested in this period. Similar examples can be found in the mosaics of S. Appolinare Nuovo in Ravenna, the Archangel Ivory in the possession of the British Museum, and a relief marble carving of Gabriel in the Antalya Museum.⁵⁴

At Side, two vaulted openings to the *scaenae* were similarly transformed into Christian places of worship with fresco decoration in the 5th or 6th century. Mansel describes these as chapels, implying a liturgical function, though it is not clear on what grounds he employs the term.⁵⁵ At the Aphrodisias theatre, the converted corridor is oriented north to south, and there is no evidence for liturgical furniture or any of the architectural features that one might associate with such a chapel. Cormack argued that this was a "small oratory for private devotions", though he acknowledged that it was impossible to reconstruct exactly the form of worship that was offered to the Archangels.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it would appear that this was significantly different to that conducted in the cathedral.

Informal practices could be harshly condemned by ecclesiastical figures. The roughly contemporary anti-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch Severus railed against such depictions of the archangels. The occasion was the translation of martyrs' relics into a church dedicated to the Michael in Antioch, sometime between November 514 and November 515.⁵⁷

51 Cormack, "Wall Painting," pp. 109–11.

52 Cormack, "Wall Painting," p. 112.

53 Cormack, "Wall Painting," p. 121.

54 Archangel Ivory: Ormonde Dalton, *Catalogue of early Christian antiquities and objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and mediaeval antiquities and ethnography of the British museum* (London, 1901), no. 295. For Gabriel in the Antalya Museum see Ünal Demirer, *A Catalogue of The Antalya Museum* (Istanbul, 2005), no. 168.

55 Arif Mansel, *Die Ruinen von Side* (Berlin, 1963), p. 140.

56 Cormack, "Wall Painting," p. 115.

57 Pauline Allen, "Severus of Antioch and the Homily: The End of the Beginning?" in *The Sixth Century, End or Beginning?* ed. Pauline Allen, *Byzantina Australiensia* 10 (Brisbane, 1996).

But the presumptuous hand of the painters, being a law unto itself since it condones the fictions of pagan illusions regarding idolatry ... clothes Michael and Gabriel in the manner of lords or kings with a royal robe of purple, adorns them with a crown and places in their right hand the sign of rulership and universal authority ... Those who so senselessly honour the angels depart from the church and transgress her laws: those who ordered and set in place the holy canons have placed these people under anathema.⁵⁸

Severus here is possibly making reference to the canons of Laodikeia. He was likely well acquainted with pagan angel invocations, having been born into a pagan family in Pisidia and reputedly having experimented with pagan magic while a student in Alexandria.⁵⁹ Throughout the homily, Severus is keen to demonstrate in detail the Orthodox approach to angel veneration. He admits both high angelology in which the angels celebrate the celestial liturgy and elements of a more intercessory and perhaps more popular understanding of their function.⁶⁰ However, as the above passage suggests, he took a determinedly iconophobic stance on angel cult. His close Monophysite ally Philoxenos of Mabbog seems to have advocated a similar position.⁶¹ Interestingly, Severus does acknowledge that those participating in heterodox angel cult consider themselves true Christians, but argues that they are led astray by shallow theological understanding:

For they worship the angels like gods; and again, without moderation, they go forth beyond lawful boundaries, and as the outward garment of piety they possess the covering of daemon-worship. Thus it is also the case that many of those who acknowledge themselves as Christians are sick, because they conceal a pagan mind under a sheep's skin, and do not recognize the excellent greatness, yes indeed, the high sublimity of our mystery.⁶²

58 Severus, *Homily LXXII* (PO 12/1:83) trans. Pauline Allen and Charles Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*. The Early Church Fathers (London, 2004).

59 Allen and Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, p. 6.

60 For a detailed exposition of Severus' angelology see Allen, "Severus of Antioch and the Homily," pp. 170–4.

61 André De Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963), pp. 88–90.

62 Severus, *Homily LXXII* (PO 12/1:74) trans. Pauline Allen and Hayward R., *Severus of Antioch*. The Early Church Fathers (London, 2004).

This is then the context in which we ought to place the 6th century icons of Michael and Gabriel in the theatre. The “lawful boundaries” of angel veneration were likely still highly contested at this time.

3 Narrative 2: From Ancient Polis to Medieval Town

During the first half of the 7th century, one or several events precipitated the deposition of massive destruction horizons that covered the late antique city until archaeological excavations began in the 1960s.⁶³ The street running from the west portico of the Sebasteion to the Tetracylon to the north was obscured by the façade of the upper stories of its portico, which had collapsed and lay horizontal but still articulated in piers and brick arches directly above the paving slabs. With the exception of a few sites that demonstrably maintained their administrative and economic functions into the medieval period, the towns that emerged from the ruins of the so-called Byzantine Dark Age have often been considered to be completely alien from their classical antecedents.⁶⁴ A particularly strident example of this attitude can be found in Charalambos Bouras’ commentary on cities in the *Economic History of Byzantium*:

The resettling of a site of strategic and productive importance where there was an abundance of building materials does not coincide precisely with the meaning of the term ‘revival’; in effect, these, too, were new towns, without memories or experiences of the old cities on whose ruins they stood.⁶⁵

No individual member of a medieval community would be able recall the experiences of living in a late antique city. Yet medieval inhabitants would have reproduced narratives about the ancient structures around which they lived, even if they may have been etiological rather than directly handed down from

63 For example Roland Smith and Charlotte Ratté, “Archaeological Research at Aphrodisias in Caria, 1994,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 100 (1996), 5–33, for a deposit over a street level in the southwest of the city dated on numismatic grounds to the early 7th century.

64 The term Dark-Age is still accepted by some scholars of the period: Michael Decker, *The Byzantine Dark Ages* (London, 2016). But see John Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), for a critique.

65 Charalambos Bouras, “Aspects of the Byzantine City, Eighth-Fifteenth Centuries,” in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C., 2002), p. 502.

late antiquity. So, for example, in the *Life of Saint Theodore of Edessa*, composed c.A.D. 900, the protagonist saint comes upon a series of pillars inhabited until recently by stylite ascetics. He is subsequently told by local priests that the pillars were constructed during the reign of Maurice at the end of the 6th century.⁶⁶ The author of the early 9th century *Life of Philaretos* recalls that his aristocratic grandmother, on returning to her hometown of Amnia in northern Asia Minor, reconstructed many churches believed to have been destroyed in the Persian War.⁶⁷ In both cases, ruined structures were embedded within local narratives that served to explain the dramatic transformation of the urban environment of late antiquity.⁶⁸

The worship of the archangels endured unabated in medieval Staupopolis with remarkable topographic continuity. Many of the locations in which angel cult took place were saturated with visible classical and late antique material culture, and the Chonai foundation legends demonstrate that medieval narratives did trace local cults back to these periods.⁶⁹ Of course, we do not have such texts for the cult at Staupopolis, and must describe the cult through its sparse material manifestations – but it may be considered as a potential repository for local narratives between late antiquity and subsequent periods.

Provincial metropolitans were in general members of the Constantinopolitan elite who found themselves posted to distant, and often in their opinion unpleasant, provincial towns. This at least is the impression given by their heavily stylized epistolical correspondence.⁷⁰ However, this did not prevent such Byzantine towns from maintaining their own cultic identities and heavenly patrons. That the episcopal see of Staupopolis was identified with the cult of the archangel Michael is demonstrated by the iconography successive local

66 Alexander Vasiliev, "The Life of St. Theodore of Edessa," *Byzantion* 16 (1944).

67 Lennart Rydén ed. *The Life of St Philaretos the Merciful Written by His Grandson Niketas: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Indices*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 8 (Uppsala, 2002), lines 904–906. As this is the sole occurrence of Πέρσες in a text in which contemporary Arab raiders are otherwise consistently referred to as Ishmaelites, Rydén suggests that Niketas is referring to the Persians of the early 7th century.

68 Though for a fascinating recent study of collective amnesia regarding ancient monuments in medieval Constantinople see Paroma Chatterjee, "Viewing the Unknown in Eighth-Century Constantinople," *Gesta* 56/2 (2017), 137–49.

69 For Chonai *supra* No. 30.

70 Theodoros of Kyzikos' rhetorical dismissal of his see seems much in line with Bouras' analysis of the archaeological situation: Theodoros Cyzicenus, *Letters* (e cod. Vindob. phil. gr. 342), 1. For a decidedly Constantinopolitan Metropolitan of Staupopolis see the letters 9 and 19 of Ignatios the Deacon, who took time to scold bishop Nikephoros for his attempts to illegally secure property in the capital. Ignatios, ed. Cyril Mango, *The Correspondence of Ignatios, the Deacon*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, v. 39. (Washington, D.C., 1997).



FIGURE 13.5 Seal of Joseph [Metropolitan] of Karia.
AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPH, REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU
APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

bishops chose to employ on their official seals. Some of these are documented in collected volumes of Byzantine sigillography and many more have been found on site during the course of excavations. A selection of the latter were studied and published by Nesbitt in 1983, though without reference to their archaeological contexts.⁷¹ An 8th century seal in the Zacos Veglery corpus of Eustathios, Metropolitan of Stauropolis, displays on its obverse Michael standing and holding a *labarum*. Two monograms to the left and right of the archangel resolve into the invocation "Commander of Hosts, Help!"⁷² A seal in the possession of the museum at Aphrodisias, without an accession number that would reveal its archaeological context, belonged to Joseph of Karia and dates to the 10th century. The obverse bears a bust of Michael with his wings spread wide and holding a scepter in his left hand.

A parallel specimen is documented in Laurent's corpus.⁷³ A similar bust image of the archangel is found on a seal of the 11th century bishop Eustratios recorded by Laurent.⁷⁴ That of a Metropolitan named Michael discovered within the Bishop's Palace itself and dating to the 10th century provides yet another.⁷⁵ Laurent commented on this reoccurring motif and the frequency with which bishops of Stauropolis adopted the name Michael. He correctly

71 Nesbitt, "Seals from Aphrodisias," pp. 159–64; Vitalien Laurent, *Le Corpus des Sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*. v 1–3 *L'Eglise* (Paris, 1963, 1965, 1972); Zacos, G. and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, Vol. 1 (Basel, 1972).

72 Georges Zacos and Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 1351; Nesbitt "Seals from Aphrodisias," p. 159.

73 Nesbitt, "Seals from Aphrodisias" no.2; Laurent, *Sceaux*, no. 515.

74 Laurent, *Sceaux*, no. 519.

75 Nesbitt, "Seals from Aphrodisias," no. 3, paralleled by Laurent, *Sceaux*, no. 516.

hypothesized before any systematic excavation had begun that the cathedral of the see must have been dedicated to the archangel, although he could not find any textual confirmation for his suspicion.⁷⁶ Representations of local saints on episcopal seals are not uncommon. The only Middle Byzantine seal found so far at Hierapolis in Phrygia seems to depict St. Philip, whose martyrion and tomb attracted flocks of pilgrims to the city in late antiquity.⁷⁷ From the 7th century onward, seals of the Metropolitans of Athens carried the image of the Theotokos, reflecting her veneration at the city's cathedral in the Parthenon.⁷⁸ Kaldellis suggests that this served to assert local identity and to advertise the city's cult to potential pilgrims – the same might well have been true of Michael at Stauropolis.⁷⁹

An iconographic composition intriguingly similar to that of Michael and Gabriel in the theatre can be found in the Bishop's Palace, a late antique mansion house close to the cathedral that was renovated in the 9th or 10th century.⁸⁰ That this was the residence of the bishop is suggested by its close proximity to the cathedral, finds of many lead seals of the Metropolitan, and the transformation of several rooms into private chapels with Middle Byzantine liturgical furniture. The image is a relief carving located on a column in the central peristyle of the complex. In parts of the house, the medieval renovation necessitated the construction of new marble floors above layers of late antique destruction debris. Other sections, such as this peristyle and a large triconch audience chamber, required less drastic intervention. Our column was probably employed at a different location in the late antique house, and was only erected here in the medieval period.⁸¹ Two figures, robed, winged and sandaled, stand framed beneath an architectural pediment.

It is immediately obvious that this is not a product of the Byzantine era, and that the elegant figures with flowing drapery were carved in antiquity. They

76 Laurent, *Sceaux* Vol. 1, p. 381.

77 Paul Arthur, *Byzantine and Turkish Hierapolis (Pamukkale): An Archaeological Guide* (Istanbul, 2006), p. 93.

78 Anthony Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon: Classicism and Pilgrimage in Byzantine Athens* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 137; Laurent, *Sceaux* Nos. 585–607.

79 Kaldellis, *Christian Parthenon*, pp. 137–41.

80 The palace was the subject of a PhD dissertation by Michelle Berenfeld, although this focused primarily on its late antique phases of occupation. For an analysis of the late antique mansion see Michelle Berenfeld, "The Triconch House and the Predecessors of the Bishop's Palace at Aphrodisias," *American Journal of Archaeology* 113.2 (2009), 203–29. Berenfeld will soon be publishing a full monograph on the Bishop's Palace/Triconch House within the Aphrodisias series.

81 Michelle Berenfeld, *Aphrodisias XI: The Triconch House* (forthcoming).



FIGURE 13.6

Relief carving on a column in the Bishop's Palace.

AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPH, REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

may have been intended as Nemesis accompanied by Nike.⁸² However, to a Byzantine audience the worn relief would have served well as an icon of the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Provincial bishops and visiting ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries would have been confronted with an image of the city's celestial patrons.

Within the cathedral itself, the well in the east apse continued to be used throughout the Middle Byzantine period. Three class A anonymous copper *folles* minted between 970 and 1028 were found at the very bottom of the well shaft.⁸³ Two *fulus* of the Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad (1219–1237) found around a metre above these suggest that it was probably still functioning, though poorly maintained, in the generation subsequent to the destruction of the cathedral superstructure in the 1190s.⁸⁴ Carved marble screens, pillars and epistyles attest to many phases of restoration and maintenance during the 9th through the 12th centuries.⁸⁵ These renovations included the erection of an elaborate aedicule consisting of a circular marble band with an outer diameter of three metres, probably supported by columns. Twenty-two fragments of this band survive, with intricately decorated undersides and an inscription running the length of the outer circumference punctuated by ornamental bosses.⁸⁶ Of the inscription little can be reconstructed save for the phrase “ἀγγέλων πρωτ[ο]στάτη[ς].” This is not a widely employed epithet, and without a definite article

82 Michelle Berenfeld, *The Triconch House*.

83 Following the chronology of the A2 folles proposed by Vujadin Ivanisevic, “Interpretations and Dating of the Folles of Basil II and Constantine VIII – The Class of A2,” *ZRVI* 27 (1989), 37–9.

84 I thank Scott Redford (personal communication) for his reading and identification of these coins.

85 I am in the process of documenting these furnishings as part of my DPhil dissertation on Middle Byzantine Aphrodisias.

86 Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, no. 99.



FIGURE 13.7 Frescos in the synthronon passageway, line drawing.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NYU APHRODISIAS PROJECT.

it is unclear whether it should be considered a title or simply a description. Roueché points out that although the phrase describes Gabriel in the Akathistos Hymn, John of Damascus also uses it of Lucifer before his fall.⁸⁷ This may therefore not be exclusive to one angel, and here probably indicates Michael. A further fragment of the inscription mentions the bodies of the dead. Perhaps deviation from the more standard epithet “ἀρχιστρατήγος” might be explained by a funerary context in which it was the psychopompic rather than military functions of the archangel that were emphasized.⁸⁸

Glass paste and gold leaf tesserae found loose in the fill of the east apse and in the northern aisle indicate that the decorative scheme of the Middle Byzantine cathedral included some mosaics, which may well have been figural. Unfortunately none of these survive, but in a tunnel-like corridor running in a semicircle behind and beneath the *synthronon* a series of frescoes have been uncovered. The interior western wall was painted with large jeweled crosses that have survived relatively intact since their exposure in the 1960s. The same cannot be said of a series of standing figures on the east wall, although line drawings made shortly after their excavation have preserved their iconographic content. Parts of at least 22 figures are attested, with compositional space for at least three more.⁸⁹

Christ stands at the centre, flanked by the Theotokos to his left and Michael to his right. Gabriel is to the left of the virgin, and John the Baptist to the right of Michael. Gabriel, the Theotokos, Michael, and John all turn towards Christ, while the figures fanning out at either side of this central composition face directly forwards. Michael has taken the place of the *Prodomos* in the *deisis* composition, thereby emphasizing the intercessory power of the archangels. A

87 Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, no. 99, citing John of Damascus *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 18.2. For the Akathistos Hymn see Constantine Trypanis, *Fourteen early Byzantine Cantica* (Vienna, 1968).

88 As suggested by Marc Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Vol. 1: Texts and Contexts* (Vienna, 2003), p. 349.

89 Hebert, *Temple-Church*, p. 224.

description of a variant *deisis* of exactly the kind encountered in Stauropolis appears in the contemporary *Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion*. A dying monk lies down upon his mat “at the spot where the images of the Theotokos and the archangel Michael extend [their hands] in intercession to the Savior.” The cult of the archangels features prominently in this work of 11th century hagiography, composed in the Maeander region.⁹⁰ The insertion of locally significant saints into this traditional composition is attested elsewhere – in a *deisis* at S. Marco in Venice, the evangelist similarly usurps John’s customary position.⁹¹

4 Conclusion

This paper has sought to critically assess two historiographical narratives while acknowledging that past actors also narrated their own pasts, both recent and deep. The cult of the archangels was a defining feature of both the late antique and Middle Byzantine city. However, while the sacred topography of the settlement remained surprisingly constant, the narratives that endorsed or contested that topography did not.

Our critique began by bringing attention to a neglected wellhead. It was argued that the massive eastwards extension of the temple/cathedral structure was effected in order that this wellhead might be incorporated within the east apse of the cathedral. This observation is difficult to square with the narrative of pagan and Christian conflict put forward in previous appraisals of the temple-to-church conversion, though it is important not to entirely discount this paradigm as one that may have appealed to some contemporary actors. An alternative interpretation was outlined according to which ecclesiastical authorities acted to domesticate potentially heterodox forms of veneration offered to ἄγγελοι. The informal cult offered to archangels in the theatre of Aphrodisias was then adduced as an example of continued negotiation over appropriate forms of angel cult. The second section of the paper considered the cult of the archangels as an example of continuity between the late antique and medieval periods. That the see of Stauropolis actively promoted the cult

90 Gregory, trans. Richard Greenfield, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh-Century Pillar Saint*, Byzantine Saints’ Lives in Translation 3 (Washington, D.C., 2000). For the quotation see Chapter 173. For further evidence of angel cult at Lazaros’ monastic foundations see Chapter 253.

91 For a discussion of variants on the traditional *deisis* iconography see Anthony Cutler, “Under the Sign of the Deësis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 145–54.

of Michael was demonstrated through the iconography found in the cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and on episcopal seals.

The cult of the archangels at Aphrodisias/Stauropolis challenges many of our assumptions regarding continuity, transformation, and social memory in classical and medieval urban communities. It may be the case that the city of Aphrodite became the city of the cross, and that conditions of life in the latter were dramatically different from those in the former. Nevertheless, an analysis of the cult of the archangels at Aphrodisias/Stauropolis cautions against the imposition of inflexible dichotomies of ancient religious identity or scholarly periodisation.

Crosses as Water Purification Devices in Byzantine Palestine

Stephen Humphreys

1 Introduction¹

Both texts and the material record indicate that Christian ritual interaction with water increased between the 4th and 7th centuries, but they also suggest that it became more diverse. Textual sources clearly indicate that individuals of sufficient righteousness were regarded as capable of enhancing the functionality of water through consecration; water became not only an agent of ritual purification, but also an element that benefitted from ritual purification. The concept of “Holy water” as it exists in the present day coalesced during this period.

The following paper will attempt to interpret the significance of 35 crosses found on the walls of 21 water storage installations (cisterns and reservoirs) in light of these contemporary Christian attitudes toward water. The cross entered into the repertoire of acceptable Christian imagery in the 4th century, and by the 5th–6th centuries was a dominant artistic motif.² Crosses dating to the Byzantine period have been attributed a wide variety of functions, none of them mutually exclusive. Byzantine Christians believed the physical sign of the cross could drive demons from statues, buildings, and entire landscapes, bring good fortune or guard against bad, or simply indicate Christian presence or identity.³ Despite the complexity inherent in narrowly defining the function

1 I would like to thank my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Anna Leone, for agreeing to read and provide comments on an early draft of this paper. I would also like to thank my colleague Mr. Andrew King for suggesting many of the primary sources.

2 H.R. Storch, “The Trophy and the Cross: Pagan and Christian Symbolism in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries,” *Byzantion* 40 (1970), pp. 105–17.

3 For an excellent overview of current research see I. Jacobs, “Cross Graffiti as Physical Means to Christianize the Classical City: An Exploration of Their Function, Meaning, Topographical, and Socio-Historical Contexts,” in *Graphic Signs of Power and Faith in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Essays on Early Graphicacy*, eds. I. Garipzanov, C. Goodson, and H. Maguire (Turnhout, 2016). Other particularly influential sources not cited elsewhere include T. Kristensen, “Miraculous Bodies: Christian Viewers and the Transformation of “Pagan” Sculpture in Late Antiquity,” in *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity*, eds. S. Birk and B. Poulsen (Aarhus, 2012), pp. 31–66; J. Moralee, “The Stones of St. Theodore: Disfiguring

of cross images, this paper will put forward the argument that these 35 crosses should be viewed not as indicators of ecclesiastical ownership as has been previously suggested, but rather as apotropaic devices intended to protect the contents of water storage installations against demonic influence and physical corruption.

The crosses described here date between the 5th and 7th century A.D., although in some cases the installations in which they were created pre-date this period. The geographic scope was limited to modern-day Israel, a territory roughly analogous to the Byzantine territories of *Palaestina Prima*, *Palaestina Secunda*, and western *Palaestina Tertia*. The dataset consists only of published material; it is a virtual certainty that this represents an incomplete catalogue of cistern crosses even within the area examined. A number of factors likely contribute to somewhat cursory attention given to some of the crosses presented here, many of which were described only in passing in field reports, and suggest that other known crosses remain unpublished. Cisterns are rarely targeted for excavation, meaning that their walls are often not exposed in their entirety. Even exposed crosses are notoriously easy to miss, as has been noted in other attempts to catalogue cross ornamentations.⁴ This is exacerbated by the fact that visibility was not necessarily a determining factor in the placement of most of the crosses listed here, as will be discussed in greater detail below. It is important to note that crosses associated with inscriptions are likely over-represented here as they are more likely to be published and, when published, are described in greater detail. Additional study is necessary in order to determine the geographic and temporal extent of this phenomenon.

2 Cistern Crosses

Ine Jacobs has recently emphasized the need to examine the application method and context of crosses within a dataset in order to accurately determine

the Pagan Past in Christian Gerasa," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 14, 2 (2006), p. 206; H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol 44 (1990), pp. 54–5; Øystein Hjort, "Augustus Christianus – Livia Christiana: *Sphragis* and Roman Portrait Sculpture," in *Aspect of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium: Papers read at a Colloquium held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul 31 May-5 June, 1992*, eds. Lennart Rydén and Jan Olof Rosenqvist (Stockholm, 1993), p. 106.

4 See James Crow, "The Christian Symbols and Iconography of the Aqueducts of Thrace," in *The Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople*, eds. J. Crow, J. Bardill, and R. Bayliss, *Journal of Roman Studies Monographs* 11 (London, 2008), p. 158; Luke Lavan, "Distinctive Field Methods for Late Antiquity," in *Field Methods and Post-Excavation Techniques in Late Antique Archaeology*, eds. L. Lavan and M. Mulrayan, *Late Antique Archaeology*, 9 (Leiden, 2013), p. 67.

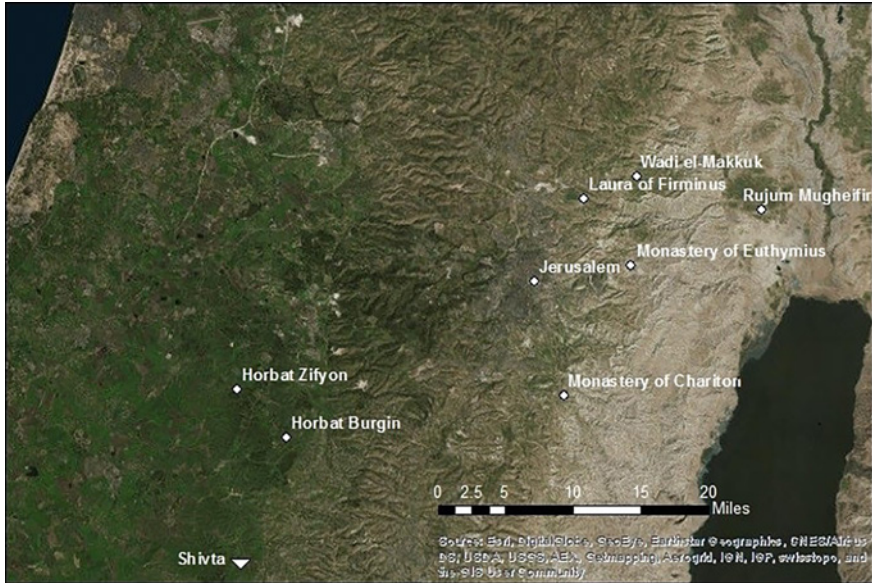


FIGURE 14.1 Map of Palestine, with sites discussed marked.
MAP DATA ©2018 GOOGLE

their individual and/or aggregate function.⁵ For this reason, the installation in which each cross was found will be described in brief, as will the place of each installation in the landscape.

a) A large, particularly well-documented cistern from the Kidron valley in Jerusalem was discovered during the course of an archaeological project 65 meters from St. Stephen's Church.⁶ The installation was cut into the alluvium within the valley, and was dated to the Byzantine period based upon its proximity to Byzantine churches at Gethsemane, the crosses themselves, and the color and matrix of the sealing plaster. The five crosses found on the walls were meticulously documented and published, as was a single Mamluk-era jug, which presumably fell in long after the installation had gone out of use and been filled with debris. Three molded plaster crosses and a single painted cross were located high on the east wall of the installation. A fifth plaster cross was located on the north wall. The images range between 45-90 cm in height and 35-60 cm in width; they are simple and unadorned, making precise dating

5 I. Jacobs, "Cross Graffiti as Physical Means to Christianize the Classical City: An Exploration of Their Function, Meaning, Topographical, and Socio-Historical Contexts," in *Graphic Signs of Power and Faith in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Essays on Early Graphicacy*, eds. I. Garipzanov, C. Goodson, and H. Maguire (Turnhout: Forthcoming).

6 J. Seligman and A. Re'em, "A Byzantine-Period Cistern Near the Church of St. Stephen, Jerusalem," *Atiqot* 44 (2003), pp. 249-52. Photo from *ibid.* p. 249.

difficult. The water within the cistern was raised via two shafts in the ceiling and the installation was not meant to be accessed. It is clear from published photographs and illustrations that all five crosses are located near the top of the installation. Those on the east face are on the curved barrel of the vault and would actually have faced downward into the water while the installation was in use. The cistern was left unexcavated.

b) Another cistern associated directly with the complex of St. Stephen's church also included a molded plaster cross and a blank tabula ansata on the west face of the installation.⁷ The cistern is described only as "large," but it appears to have served as part of a substantial network of channels intended to collect rainwater from the surrounding courtyard and rooftops. The dimensions and location of this figure within the cistern were not published and the installation was left unexcavated. A smaller cistern located nearby was mentioned only in passing and appears not to have included a cross decoration.

c) In the town of Shivta in the Negev, a small cistern, no. 24 in Tsvika Tsuk's catalogue, contained one Greek, one Latin, and one horned cross, all crafted of Glycimeris shells embedded in the plaster.⁸ Additional details on the cistern or the orientation of the crosses within are not published.

d) A similar horned cross made of shells was found on the wall of cistern no. 25 at Shivta.⁹

e) A third cistern at Shivta (no. 30) included four small shell crosses placed in a vertical line upon the wall.¹⁰

f) A fourth cistern at Shivta (no. 43) included two crosses "smeared" high on the west wall in mud, with a two-row inscription reading "Johannes (son of) Kyriakos" written in mud between them in Greek.¹¹ Tsuk speculates that this commemorates the work of the last individual to have cleaned the cistern.

g) A cistern located to the northwest of the rotunda of the Anastasis in the modern Franciscan convent of the Holy Sepulchre contains one of the more

7 Sara Ben-Arieh and E. Netzer, "Excavations along the "Third Wall" of Jerusalem, 1972–1974," *Israel Exploration Journal* 24/2 (1974), p. 106.

8 T. Tsuk, "The Water Supply System of Shivta in the Byzantine Period," *Cura Aquarum in Israel: in memoriam Dr. Ya'akov Eren; proceedings of the 11th international conference on the history of water management and hydraulic engineering in the Mediterranean region*, eds. C. Ohlig et al. (Jerusalem, 2002), p. 73.

9 Tsuk, "Water Supply System," p. 73.

10 Tsuk, "Water Supply System," p. 74.

11 Tsuk, "Water Supply System," p. 72–3.

elaborate cross decorations examined here.¹² The decoration is located near to the vault of the cistern, in its northwestern corner. A double-framed medallion with an ivy leaf motif encloses a large cross and an inscription. The Greek inscription within the medallion, split by the cross, quotes Psalms 29:3: *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters*. This phrase frequently appears in baptismal fonts as well as in the baptismal and Epiphany liturgies.¹³ In Leah Di Segni's view, based upon the paleography, the inscription/decoration dates to the 6th or 7th century and likely represents work done to re-plaster the cistern, which was constructed along with the church (4th century). It is also significant to the argument presented here that Di Segni associates the re-plastering and sealing of the cistern with its physical and spiritual defilement during the Persian conquest; in her view, it is possible that due to the number of bodies found within cisterns, many were cleansed and replastered by Modestus between 616 and 626 A.D. The cistern itself is rectangular and quite large, measuring 29 meters long, 19 meters wide and 8 meters high.

h) A similar cross and accompanying inscription were found in a cistern below the Little Galilee Church in the Viri Galilaei compound, near the Mount of Olives.¹⁴ The cross is molded into the plaster on the cistern's east wall but further details about its size or appearance are not published. The inscription from Psalms 29:3 is identical. Di Segni dates this inscription to the 6th century based upon its similarities to other nearby inscriptions listed here. The cistern itself is not described.

i) The best-known example of a cross within a cistern likely comes from the water storage installation that was built into the substructure of the truly massive Nea Church in Jerusalem.¹⁵ This installation is of impressive dimensions, measuring 33 meters in length by 9.5-17 meters wide by 11 meters in depth. The 66 cm high cross is located directly beneath a tabula ansata, and is located 8 meters above the surface (i.e. approximately 3 meters below the vault) directly

12 For additional details and references see L. Di Segni, "Inscription in plaster, on the wall of a cistern, 6-7 c." in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705-1120*, eds. H. Cotton et al. (Berlin, 2011), no. 789, pp. 94-5. Photo taken from C. Tinelli, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 23 (1973), p. 99, fig. 3.

13 J. and L. Robert, "Bulletin Epigraphique," in *Revue des études grecques* (1953), pp. 112-212.

14 For additional details and references see L. Di Segni, "Citation of Psalm 28 (29), 3," in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705-1120*, ed. H. Cotton et al. (Berlin, 2011), no. 829, pp. 144, 146.

15 For additional details and references see L. Di Segni, "Nea Church-Greek building inscription moulded in plaster on the wall of a cistern." in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705-1120*, ed. H. Cotton et al. (Berlin, 2011), no. 800, pp. 105-7.

in front of an entrance to the cistern. Both the cross and tabula ansata were molded from plaster and applied to the identical material of the reservoir wall before being painted red. The tabula ansata contains a dedicatory inscription attributing the funding used to construct the cistern to a donation from Emperor Flavius Justinian; the discovery of both a cross and a tabula ansata within a cistern was previously noted above in the cistern near St. Stephen's church, but is somewhat unusual. This may account for the equally unusual conspicuous placement of the associated cross. Di Segni dates the inscription to either 549/550 or 564/565 A.D. Given the proximity and like construction method it is safe to assume the same date for the cross decoration.

j) Yizhar Hirschfeld also mentions another unpublished cross which was found in a separate reservoir beneath the opposite end of the Nea Church annex, but does not provide more precise details on form or location.¹⁶

k) During a survey of the upper portion of the Wadi el-Makkuk in the northern Judean Desert, two separate water installations containing crosses were identified. Two cisterns associated with a Byzantine monastery were found approximately 45 meters above the wadi floor. The southernmost installation contained a horned cross with symmetrical arms 25 cm in length, incised into the plaster "along the upper edge of the wall on the eastern side of the cistern."¹⁷ The cistern was relatively large for the area, with an interior diameter of approximately 5 meters, a height of at least 3.4 meters, and a minimum capacity of 80 cubic meters.

l) A cave located during the same survey, identified as the "Spring Cave," also contained a cross which was tentatively attributed to the Byzantine period. The cave itself was likely converted into a reservoir at an earlier period based on the type of plaster used and the presence of Early Roman ceramic material discovered when the installation was excavated.¹⁸ The cave appears to have been adapted to maximize the efficiency of what was effectively a naturally occurring water catchment feature. A wall of roughly cut stones sealed the round, 1.3-meter entrance to the cave and contained the water within. The interior reservoir stored water that routinely seeped in from cracks in the walls of the cave. It measures 1.3-2.4 meters by 9.5 meters, with a maximum depth of 2 meters. Steps were cut into the southern end to allow access to the deepest section, and Hirschfeld and Riklin propose that the cave was utilized as a Jewish ritual bath (*miqveh*) during the first phase of its construction. The

16 Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judean desert monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven, 1992), p. 276, note 13.

17 Y. Hirschfeld and S. Riklin, "Region 11: Survey and Excavations in the Upper Wadi el-Makkuk Caves," *Atiqot* 41/2 (2002), p. 10.

18 Y. Hirschfeld and S. Riklin, "Upper Wadi el-Makkuk Caves," p. 14.

small, incised cross is noted only in passing; it was found on the east wall, and the excavators suggested it dated to the Byzantine period. It is notable that many of the natural caverns and terraces in this area were converted to serve monastic communities or lone individuals in the Byzantine period; numerous nearby reservoirs and cisterns were identified by area survey and the majority did not include crosses or decorations of any type.

m) Haim Goldfus noted the presence of two crosses molded in plaster near the top of the one of the primary reservoirs that gathered runoff water for a monastic community at present-day Khallat ed-Danabiya, near Wadi el-Makkuk.¹⁹ The better-preserved cross measures 0.5 x 0.7 m. The orientation of the cross within the cistern is not provided, but it is apparent from the attached photograph that at least one of the two crosses was placed at the installation's upper edge. It is visible today and would presumably have been so in antiquity as well.

n) A substantial underground complex at Horbat Zifyon was recorded and published after it was discovered by an amateur archaeology club.²⁰ The complex consists of open rooms used for habitation and storage, passages, and a cistern, and appears to have been occupied during the Hellenistic, Early Roman, and Byzantine-Early Islamic periods. The cistern in which two crosses were found seems to have been constructed during the earlier Hellenistic/Roman phase of the complex's lifespan. It was originally accessible only by a 4-meter-long shaft, which was sealed with a stone drum. At some point after the initial construction of what was originally an inaccessible bell-shaped cistern, its northeastern wall was breached by a tunnel in order to improve accessibility and movement throughout the complex. At a later date, the walls were breached in two other locations; the excavators interpreted these modifications as efforts to allow easier access to the complex's sole water supply. Two crosses were found incised onto the cistern walls, both with arms between 15-18 cm. Their location within the cistern is not described, nor is their spatial relationship with the breaches in the cistern walls.

o) The massive reservoir serving the monastery of Chariton included two relatively elaborate cross decorations. The reservoir, which was used to collect run-off from a nearby ravine via a channel some 60 meters in lengths, exhibits exceptionally fine construction methods. Its walls are of well-cut ashlars that have been stepped for additional stability. In total the installation measures 14

19 H. Goldfus, "Khallat Ed-Danabiya: A Desert Monastery," in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries: Essays in Honour of Virgilio C. Corbo*, eds. G.C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, and E. Alliata (Jerusalem, 1990), 227-44.

20 A. Avganim and B. Zissu, "Horbat Zifyon," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 110 (1999), pp. 68*-69.*

x 19.6 meters; but it was divided into two chambers. Much like the reservoir, the cross decorations within are unusually elaborate. Both are found on the east wall of the reservoir's central chamber, on either side of the structural support columns: "two large crosses surrounded by medallions 1.3 m in diameter were drawn in the plaster c. 1.6 m below the vault. The contour lines were in high relief and painted red; the patterns of the lily and leaf bending in the wind come from the repertoire of Byzantine patterns."²¹ The cistern featured entrances for maintenance, but water would normally have been drawn through four openings in the ceiling.

p) A double-mouthed cistern located in close proximity to the Monastery of St. Euthymius contained "remains of an encircled Cross in the plaster on its Eastern wall."²² Additional details on this installation and its decoration are not published.

q) A cistern associated with the Dominus Flevit monastic compound features a cross "roughly" molded in relief on the plaster wall.²³ The cross measures 67 cm in height and 45 cm in width. The cross splits a molded Greek inscription: IC XC A Ω. Additional information on the dimensions of the cistern or the orientation of the cross within is not provided.

r) A cross was molded on the east wall of a cistern located on Mount Zion, east of the Gobat School.²⁴ The cistern itself is rock-cut and is small compared to others listed here, measuring only 3.2 meters long. It has small recesses extending to the north and the west. The cross itself is very similar to the example from the Dominus Flevit compound: a horned cross splits the IC XC A Ω inscription. Thomsen dated this inscription to the 5th century but Di Segni hypothesized a 7th-8th century date.

s) The *laura* of Firminus in the Judean wilderness contains a gray-plastered, roughly cubical chamber that could only have served as a cistern.²⁵ The phrase

21 Y. Hirschfeld, "The water supply of the Monastery of Chariton," in *The Aqueducts of Israel, Journal of Roman Archaeology* Suppl. 46., eds. D. Amit, J. Patrich, and Y. Hirschfeld (Portsmouth, 2002), pp. 432.

22 D.J. Chitty, "The monastery of St Euthymius," *Palestinian Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 64 (1932), p. 190.

23 For additional details and references see L. Di Segni, "Cross in relief on wall of cistern," in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705–1120*, ed. H. Cotton et al. (Berlin, 2011), no. 827, pp. 143. Photo taken from E. Testa, *Il simbolismo dei giudeo-cristiani* (Jerusalem, 1962), p. 251, pl. 24.3.

24 For additional details and references see L. Di Segni, "Horned cross in relief on wall of cistern," in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 2: 705–1120*, ed. H. Cotton et al. (Berlin, 2011), no. 807, pp. 112–3.

25 M. Marcoff and D.J. Chitty, "Notes on Monastic Research in the Judean Wilderness, 1928–9," *Palestinian Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 1929 (1929), pp. 167–178; Hirschfeld, *Judean desert monasteries*, pp. 157–8.

"*The Voice of the Lord is on the waters*," is written in Syriac in red paint twice at the entrance to the chamber and once on the wall within. The presence of this phrase in the liturgy and at least two water marks upon the walls led Marcoff and Chitty to initially identify the chamber as a baptistery despite recognizing that it also occurred at the cistern within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Details regarding the crosses within the cistern are minimal. From the available photos, it appears that at least two horned crosses are located just above steps leading into the installation, in close proximity to the ceiling; they were therefore in view of those drawing water. Marcoff and Chitty suggest that variations in the paint of the crosses indicate that they represent different phases of decoration. Additional information about the orientation of the crosses or dimensions of the cistern was not published.

t) The so-called "Inscriptions Cistern" at Horvat Burgin in the Judean Shephelah opens along its western edge into an irregular cavity, the southern wall of which features a horned cross.²⁶ The cross is positioned near the floor at the edge of the cavity, near the steps that lead down into the cistern. The arms of this cross measure 30 cm x 35 cm. Other crosses are located within the cistern itself, which is quite large (8.5 meters to the unexcavated debris, with an oval bottom measuring roughly 8.6 x 7.3 meters). These were initially identified as serving an apotropaic function²⁷ but due to the accompanying ancient Georgian inscriptions they were later dated to the 10th or 11th century, when the cistern was converted into a hermitage.²⁸ During the Byzantine period, this cistern would have served the nearby village.

u) Conder and Kitchener make cursory mention of barrel vaulted reservoirs located beneath the ground at the monastery at Rujum Mugheifir. In one of these cisterns was noted the presence of "a stone with a carved design of a quatrefoil in a circle."²⁹ Hirschfeld interprets this as another example of the cross-in-medallion motif but does not provide a justification for this interpretation.³⁰ As additional details on the reservoir or decoration are not provided, this claim must be met with a degree of skepticism.

26 B. Zissu, A. Ganor, E. Klein, and A. Klein, "New Discoveries at Horvat Burgin in the Judean Shephelah: Tombs, Hiding Complexes, and Graffiti," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 145 (2013), pp. 29–52.

27 B. Zissu and A. Ganor, "Survey and Excavations at Horbat Burgin in the Judean Shephelah: Burial Caves, Hiding Complexes and Installations of the Second Temple and Byzantine Periods," *Atiqot* 58 (2008), p. 61.*

28 Y. Tchekhanovets, "Georgian inscriptions from Horvat Burgin," in *Christ is here! Studies in Biblical and Christian archaeology in memory of Michelle Piccirillo* (Jerusalem, 2013), pp. 159–66.

29 C. Conder and H. Kitchener, *The survey of western Palestine: Memoirs of the topography, orography, hydrography, and archaeology*, Vol. 3 (London, 1883), 221.

30 Y. Hirschfeld, *Desert monasteries*, p. 276, note 12.

3 Discussion

Yizhar Hirschfeld is the only scholar who has previously put forward an interpretation for the presence of cross decorations within Byzantine cisterns and reservoirs. The theory put forward by Hirschfeld, which was echoed by Seligman in his thorough publication of the cistern in the Kidron valley, is that the appearance of crosses within cisterns is evidence of ecclesiastical ownership.³¹ This hypothesis relies upon similarities between the most elaborate examples. The Nea Church reservoir was clearly reliant upon imperial funding, as demonstrated by the inscription. In Hirschfeld's view, the scale and quality of the materials and construction of the Chariton reservoir are likewise indicative of external financial support of a civil and/or ecclesiastical nature.³² This may well be the case, but in the author's view, the presence of relatively elaborate cross decorations in these locations does not indicate this. Many of the crosses listed here are found within monastic contexts or beneath contemporary churches, where ecclesiastical ownership could be assumed. Presumably, if the intent had been to designate ecclesiastical property, the crosses would have been located in areas that would have been readily visible, but this is not the case. The author argues that the funding sources which facilitated the construction of the largest and best-constructed reservoirs allowed for an accepted ritual practice, in this case protection of water resources, to be executed to a higher standard.

It should be noted that this view is not wholly opposed to the interpretation put forward by Hirschfeld. In one examination of the crosses on the walls of the cistern at Chariton, he pointed out that, as these decorations would have been completely invisible once construction of the installation was completed, their use must have been symbolic.³³ However, he follows Nahman Avigad in the belief that these crosses played a symbolic role in the dedication of these structures rather than in their on-going purification.³⁴ This interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons when the available dataset is examined in its entirety. First and foremost, the "Spring Cave" from the Wadi el-Makkuk survey, the large cistern at Shivta, and the Horbat Zifyon complex were all in use prior to the Byzantine period. It is likely that the placement of crosses within these structures did indeed signal a transition to Christian use, but there is no compelling reason to limit their purpose to a single event. Only two of the cisterns examined here (the cistern near St. Stephen's and at the

31 Hirschfeld, *Desert monasteries*, p. 109.

32 Hirschfeld, "Water supply," p. 431; Hirschfeld, *Desert monasteries*, p. 64.

33 Hirschfeld, *Desert monasteries*, pp. 63–4.

34 Hirschfeld, "Water supply," p. 437.

laura of Firminus) contain multiple crosses that are likely to have been placed at different periods, although decorations in other installations could simply have been plastered over. These may represent instances of reconsecration following an incident of corruption.

The most prominent feature of the crosses within this dataset is their placement in locations that human eyes were not intended to view. Such hidden crosses are not unique to cisterns and have been noted in both ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical contexts. The earliest interpretation of hidden crosses outside of cisterns comes from Sobodan Ćurčić's analysis of cross decorations found within the 6th-century church of Hagia Sophia.³⁵ Ćurčić concluded that crosses found upon structural points were of particular importance to the integrity of a structure, citing both visible and hidden examples from Hagia Sophia and churches elsewhere to support his hypothesis.³⁶ James Crow drew upon the interpretations of both Ćurčić and Avigad in his interpretation of over forty symbols and inscriptions from the aqueduct bridge at Kurşunlugerme, many of which were placed in areas difficult, if not impossible, to view. He found that that in some instances crosses had been placed at specific load-bearing areas such as the keystones of arches and pillar bases, and agreed with Ćurčić that these were likely intended to add supernatural strength to the structure.³⁷ However, many of the crosses were also placed in areas less closely related to structural stability. Crow believed these were intended to "attract divine fortune and blessing" upon the structure in a more general sense, and that they yielded their primary benefit at the moment they were carved upon the structure and/or dedicated.³⁸

The interpretations provided by Avigad, Ćurčić, and Crow are similar in that they attribute supernatural importance to these crosses based upon their placement in areas where humans cannot readily interact with them. However, more recent research has emphasized the Byzantine Christian belief in the

35 Sobodan Ćurčić, "Design and structural innovation in Byzantine architecture before Hagia Sophia," in *Hagia Sophia from the age of Justinian to the Present*, eds. R. Mark and A. Çakmak (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 16–38.

36 Specifically, Ćurčić points to crosses which appear on the spandrel between two arches in the late-6th century church of Hagios Titos on Crete and the mid-5th century church of Saint John Studios in Constantinople; both of these would have been covered during the original phase of construction. He cites various visible crosses within churches as further evidence. See Ćurčić, "Design and Structural Innovation," pp. 17–8 for sources.

37 James Crow, "The Christian Symbols and Iconography," p. 163.

38 James Crow, "The Christian Symbols and Iconography," p. 164. In this he cites the work of Henry Maguire, who in his discussion of Byzantine clothing drew a distinction between symbols intended to protect the wearer and those intended to bring good fortune. See H. Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 44 (1990), pp. 215–24.

ability of spiritual beings (i.e. angels and demons) to impact their daily lives.³⁹ According to this paradigm, best represented by the work of Dayna Kalleres, there is no particular need to limit the impact of the cistern crosses to the moment of their creation; they would have acted upon their intended audience in perpetuity. This interpretation is similar to that which Natalia Teteriatnikov offered for a program of hidden crosses discovered in the brickwork of the Hagia Sophia; it was covered with marble slabs during the initial construction of the building in the 6th century and its presence known only by the builders and the individual who commissioned it.⁴⁰ Based upon the placement of the scene within the central apse conch, Teteriatnikov believed its function was not limited to structural protection or the aversion of malevolent influence, but rather was related to the on-going sanctification of the building and its human inhabitants.

It is apparent that the spatial relationship of crosses to specific architectural elements has been a dominant factor in interpreting their function. While statistical analysis is made difficult by the small sample size, further diminished by the lack of published details, trends indicative of intentional standardization of practice do emerge. Out of the 19 instances in which the wall facing of the cross was published, nine (47%) were located upon the cistern or reservoir's eastern wall. The most uniform spatial relationship was the elevation of the crosses relative to the vault or ceiling of the installation. As the installations examined here vary in construction type and material, it is significant that this relationship is unchanged between cisterns whether they were rock-cut or made of ashlars, vaulted construction or bottle-shaped. The large monastic communities exhibit a particular level of standardization: all of their crosses are located upon the eastern wall of particularly large water reservoirs, near to the vault, and all of these are of the cross-in-medallion type. From the published details, the only cases in which the cross is not located within the upper third of the storage installation is cistern no. 30 at Shivta, where one cross is located relatively high on the wall and another is positioned directly underneath it, and Horbat Burgin. In the case of Horbat Burgin, given the height of the cavity adjoining the cistern in which the cross is found, the cross would have been located just above the point at which the water within the cistern was accessed. In some instances, such as the Laura of Firminus,

39 This line of reasoning summarises that put forward by Ine Jacobs, who cites Crow's work see I. Jacobs, "Cross Graffiti." For the Byzantine perceptions of supernatural activity see D. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2015).

40 Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The Hidden Cross-and-Tree Program in the Brickwork of Hagia Sophia," *Byzantinoslavica*, 56 (1995), pp. 689–99.

Horbat Burgin, and the Nea Church where access to the water was possible, the emphasis appears to have been upon placing the cross (and, in the case of Firminus, the text) at the boundary between the storage area and the exterior space. In other words, the most obvious spatial relationship these crosses share is to the water within the cistern rather than to a specific architectural feature.

Early Christian attitudes toward water illustrate why divine protection over water resources may have been desirable. The intentional de-sacralization of non-baptismal water by Christian authors is quite striking when juxtaposed with the centrality of the baptismal rite itself. Doubtless motivated by the prevailing popular attitudes, numerous authors were quick to distinguish between the mundane attributes of water and the attributes imparted to the substance via consecration. Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the 4th century, speaks at length on the profane aspect of unconsecrated water: "it is not all water that heals, but that water heals which has the grace of Christ. The element is one thing, the consecration is another; the work is one thing, the working another."⁴¹ He interprets Moses' purification of the undrinkable waters at Marra as a metaphor for the blessing of waters preceding baptism. The water is useless for the purposes of salvation until it "has been consecrated by the mystery of the saving cross."⁴² In speaking of those who are baptized without being sincere in their conversation to the faith, Gregory of Nyssa states that "in these cases the water is but water, for the gift of the Holy Spirit in no way appears in him who is thus baptismally born."⁴³

Nevertheless, there was some recognition within influential Christian circles that water possessed qualities that made it uniquely suited to containing the divine, an idea already well-established in pagan beliefs.⁴⁴ Cyril considered water to be the "noblest of the four elements we observe in the world" based upon the frequency with which it was associated with life, creation, and purification in the Old Testament texts.⁴⁵ Tertullian also viewed water as an objectively sacred substance based in part upon its presence at the earliest stages of

41 Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 1.5.15. "On the Mysteries" and the *Treatise On the Sacraments by an Unknown Author*, trans. T. Thompson, ed. J. H. Srawley (New York, 1919), p. 81.

42 Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 2.14. trans. T. Thompson, p. 50–1.

43 Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, 40. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series*, Vol. 5 (Peabody, MA, 1995), p. 508.

44 See M. Nissinen, "Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers: Water and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (Berlin, 2014), pp. 29–48. Christian authors re-appropriated and reframed: M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religions*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London, 1974), pp. 188–215.

45 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catachyses*, 3.5. E. Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem, The Early Church Fathers*, trans. E. Yarnold (London, 2000), p. 91.

the Biblical creation narrative and in part upon its life-giving qualities; water alone “provided a worthy vehicle for God.”⁴⁶ Augustine attributed special significance to water on the basis that it was easier for God to shape and move than earth.⁴⁷ Yet even for Tertullian, the efficacy of baptism comes through the water being purified by angelic activity, and appears uneasy depicting a mundane substance as if it is divine: “I fear I may seem to have collected rather the praises of water than the reasons of baptism.”⁴⁸

The very qualities that rendered water suitable for baptism also made it unusually susceptible to inhabitation by malevolent spirits. For Basil of Caesarea, the waters of earth:

represent the wicked spirits, who from their natural height have fallen into the abyss of evil. Turbulent, seditious, agitated by the tumultuous waves of passion, they have received the name of sea because of the instability and the inconstancy of their movements.⁴⁹

The mid-4th century Prayers of Sarapion, bishop of Thmuis in northern Egypt, reveal that at least in some contexts even baptismal waters were exorcised by a priest after they were poured into the font but before they were consecrated and imbued with divine essence:

King and Lord of all and creator of all, through the descent of your only-begotten Jesus Christ you have graciously given salvation to all created nature. Through the coming of your inexpressible word you have redeemed that which is formed, having been created by you. Look now from heaven and gaze upon these waters and fill them with holy Spirit. Let your inexpressible word come to be in them. Let it change their operation and make them generative, being filled with your grace, so that the mystery now being accomplished may not be found empty in those being born again, but may fill with divine grace all those who go down and are baptized.⁵⁰

46 Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 111. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, Vol. 111 Latin Christianity, eds. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, and A. Coxe (New York, NY, 1872), p. 670.

47 Augustine, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, 4:13.

48 Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 111, p. 670.

49 Basil of Caesarea, *Hexaemeron*, 3.9. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Vol VIII, St. Basil: Letters and Select Works*, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace (Grand Rapids, MI, 1996), p. 71.

50 Sarapion of Thmuis, Prayer 7: “Sanctification of Waters,” in *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis*, trans. M. Johnson, OCA 249 (Rome, 1955), p. 55.

Cyril of Jerusalem, a particularly strong advocate for the use of the cross and its association with the Holy City, elaborated upon its uses and properties:

We should boldly trace the cross with our fingers as a seal on our forehead and over everything: over the bread we eat, the cups we drink ... it is a powerful protection; to suit the poor, it costs nothing; to suit the weak, it costs no labour, since it comes as a gift from God; it is a sign for the Faithful and a terror to demons.⁵¹

A 5th-century Egyptian text by Palladius of Galatia references the ease with which water stored within cisterns could become undrinkable due to contact with the devil:

Another time he sent me to his cistern about the ninth hour to fill a jar with water for our refreshment. As I got there I happened to see an asp down in the well and I drew no water, but went back and told him: 'we perish, Father; I saw an asp in the well.' But he smiled solemnly and looked at me, then shook his head and said: 'If the devil sees fit to turn himself into a serpent or a turtle in every well, and falls into our drinking supply, shall you forever remain thirsty?' And he went out and drew water from the same well, and was the first to break his thirst by swallowing. He said: 'Where the cross goes, the evil of everything loses ground.'⁵²

It is likely that reptiles and other animals found their way into cisterns and reservoirs on a regular basis; this taint must have posed an on-going threat to the perceived purity of water supplies. During the period in question, physical corruption was typically regarded as an indicator of spiritual corruption.⁵³ These sources demonstrate a persistent belief in the vulnerability of water to corruption and the power of the cross to protect water against the same.

Furthermore, textual and epigraphic sources demonstrate a degree of institutional interest in providing clean water. Primary sources and secondary literature focus on the provision of consecrated water for use in baptism, but it is apparent that the use of ritually purified water was recognized. The explicit or implicit association between water and baptism is ever-present in

51 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catachesis* 13.36. pp. 160–1.

52 Palladius, *The Lausiac History*, trans. R.T. Meyers, *Ancient Christian Writers* 34 (New York, NY, 1964), p. 33. I am indebted to my colleague James Taylor for pointing me toward this work.

53 For discussion and sources on the importance of the physical senses (smell in particular) upon religious perception during this period, see the excellent S. Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley, 2006).

early Christian sources, and as such it is intertwined with the concept of water consecration and/or purification even outside the immediate context of baptism.⁵⁴ However, early Christian authors believed the baptismal waters which sanctified believers were themselves originally purified when Christ descended into the Jordan.⁵⁵ This sanctification of waters was celebrated in the water blessing which is known to have taken place during the earliest known iterations of Epiphany.⁵⁶ Accounts from Egeria, John Chrysostom, and Epiphanius of Salamis in the 4th century describe water being drawn and stored on 6 January in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Egypt, respectively, and the primary sources collected by Nicholas Denysenko demonstrate that the Epiphany celebration continued to emphasize God's mastery over water purity throughout the Early Byzantine period in Palestine.⁵⁷ It is worth taking particular note of Chrysostom's account, which specifies that the water drawn on this date is taken to private homes where it remains fresh and uncorrupted for as long as three years.⁵⁸ The use of water sanctified in the Epiphany ceremonies in non-ecclesiastical contexts is also attested by a 7th-century homily by Marutha of Tagrit:

[sanctified water] lasts for a long time, and whenever someone looks at it he sees it as though it had just been drawn that moment from a spring. But what happens with other water? Once it has been standing only a little while after being taken from its spring it goes bad, like a dead corpse. Whereas this water, because it possesses the divine power, is living, and it lasts a long time.⁵⁹

Marutha specifies that this water is to be consumed or sprinkled upon those who have already been baptized (i.e. Christians) in order to continually cleanse

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- 54 Relevant compilations of sources dealing with water in a baptismal context include Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2013); Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria*, vol. 5, *Message of the Fathers of the Church* (Collegeville, MN, 1992); Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, vol. 6, *Message of the Fathers of the Church* (Collegeville, MN, 1992).
- 55 For a discussion and sources see R. Jensen, *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism*, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 134–6.
- 56 See T. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 2nd. Ed (Collegeville, MN, 1991), pp. 112–7.
- 57 For the development of the Epiphany liturgy see N. Denysenko, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany: The Eastern Liturgical Tradition* (Farnham, 2012).
- 58 Sources taken from the Denysenko, *Blessings of Water*, pp. 17–8.
- 59 Marutha of Tagrit, *Homily*, 37–9. “The Homily by Marutha of Tagrit on the Blessing of the Waters at Epiphany,” trans. S. Brock, *Oriens Christianus* 66 (1982), pp. 69–70.

them from impurities. Thus, ecclesiastical engagement with water should be regarded as extending beyond the baptismal font alone; believers would have expected an annual dole of sanctified water to be used when they felt it to be necessary, likely in case of illness or adversity.

Inscriptions are associated with crosses in seven of the 19 installations. The presence of the Psalm 29:3 inscription at four sites is of interest, but additional study on the use of this verse is required.⁶⁰ In light of the textual material presented above, it is likely that with the exception of the dedicatory inscription from the Nea Church, these represent invocation texts intended to request draw the beneficence or blessing of Jesus Christ. Examples of crosses with letters placed between the arms, as occurs with the IC XC A Ω inscriptions within two of the cisterns, are known from a variety of contexts, including the Kurşunlugerme aqueduct mentioned above. They have previously been the subject of a study by Walter Christopher, who has argued that they should be regarded as apotropaic devices that carried some connotation of victory in conflict.⁶¹ In most of the cases listed above, the construction of the cistern was in fact contemporary with the church or monastery associated with it. As such, there is no indication whatsoever that these locations were previously imbued with any religious value. Thus, the placement of crosses within cisterns cannot be said to represent the triumph of Christianity over pre-existing religious practices. Any conflict alluded to in these inscriptions must be regarded as one involving exclusively Christian elements.

4 Conclusion

If the argument put forward in this paper is correct, these crosses fulfilled a utilitarian role that is at present somewhat unique. The corruption of water reserves had an immediate, tangible impact upon quality of life in a way that the corruption of a sanctuary or statue did not. This interpretation adequately accounts for the physical manifestation of what appears to be a more widely held belief. Hirschfeld believed the placement of crosses within cisterns to have

60 Horst has previously asserted that it is particularly common on tombs, for example, but to the author's knowledge no properly contextualized study of the passage has been attempted. Peter W. van der Horst, *Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Leiden, 2014) p. 78.

61 See Christopher Walter, "IC XC NI KA. The apotropaic function of the victorious cross," *Revue des études byzantines* 55 (1997), pp. 193–220.

been a representative trait of Judean monasticism, and therefore localized.⁶² The geographic distribution of the sites listed is a reflection of the author's area of research and may be expected to expand beyond the borders of modern Israel, but at present a significant number of the installations are located either within Jerusalem or its immediate vicinity, many in non-monastic contexts. This casts doubt on whether or not this can be described as a monastic phenomenon. Only by further expanding the dataset and defining the typology of cross decorations will it be possible to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

62 Hirschfeld and Riklin, "Upper Wadi el-Makkuk Caves," p. 10.

Byzantium's Ashes and the Bones of St Nicholas: Two Translations as Turning Points, 1087–1100

Alasdair C. Grant

*We keep his memory alive
In legends that our children and
Their children's children treasure still.*

From Eric Crozier's libretto to Benjamin Britten's

SAINT NICOLAS, op. 42 (1948).



1 Introduction¹

The Mediterranean in the later 11th century was characterized by the economic and military expansion of Latin Christendom at the expense of the Islamic world, culminating in the First Crusade of 1095–1099. This competitive environment gave rise to both conflict and co-operation between various cultural spheres within the ever-shifting, scalene triangular relationships between Byzantine, Latin, and Islamic interests. The 11th century was, in this sense, a turning point, since it arguably witnessed the balance of power in the Mediterranean basin tip in Christendom's favour.²

This turning point, however, was really a long and complex process that saw several dazzling flashpoints, but which was not embodied in any single event – not even in the remarkable successes of the First Crusade. Throughout the later 11th century, it is possible to discern several symptoms of this gradually shifting power balance. These symptoms may be seen arguably most

1 I would like to thank Dr Catherine Holmes and Dr Marek Jankowiak for their comments on this study at a critical stage. The opening verses are (c) copyright 1948 by Boosey & Co. Ltd., reproduced by permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

2 For a recent economic perspective, see R.D. Smith, "Calamity and Transition: Re-Imagining Italian Trade in the Eleventh-Century Mediterranean," *Past and Present* 228 (2015), pp. 15–56; for military perspectives, see n. 3, below.

precociously in the maritime cities of Italy, which embodied a powerful economic but also military expansionism in the decades immediately before the proclamation of the First Crusade.³ The present study is rooted in this context.

Two of these late 11th-century flashpoints occurred in 1087, during the brief papacy of Victor III. In May, the month of Victor's consecration as pope, an expedition sailed to Myra and effected the translation of the relics of St Nicholas to Bari. In July and August, a Pisan and Genoese coalition launched a successful raid on the North African city of al-Mahdiyya (an event to which the conclusion of this study will return). While the cult of St Nicholas has become one of the most famous of saints' cults the world over, and his Church in Bari widely known, what is not well understood is the significance of a second, subsequent translation of some remaining relics by the Venetian crusading fleet in 1100.⁴

Equally unexplored is the broader historical context of these translations in this rapidly evolving, competitive Mediterranean world of the later 11th century. It is only by considering the Venetian interest in Nicholas in the light both of Bari's 1087 expedition and of the First Crusade a decade later that the Venetian narrative source that describes it, the *Historia de translatione sanctorum magni Nicolai*, can be fully appreciated.⁵ Here, I suggest that these two translations offer a remarkable glimpse of an important turning point as two long-entrenched hubs of the Mediterranean world – Venice and Bari – fought their own battle over Nicholas' bones to the backdrop of the explosion of Latin Europe.

This study will address firstly the Barese translation, and secondly the Venetian. It will then draw together the various narrative sources for each, scrutinizing them comparatively. Finally, it will hover somewhere in the air over the Mediterranean world at the turn of the 12th century, suggesting that these two

3 The present study addresses the Venetian context. On Pisa, see especially the introduction to and comprehensive bibliography of G. Scalia ed. & intr., A. Bartola comm. & M. Guardo tr., *Enrico Pisano, Liber Maiorichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus* (Florence, 2017), pp. 3–23 & 111–77, and on Genoa, M. Hall & J. Phillips (tr.), *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades* (Farnham & Burlington VT, 2013). In this “broad-church” interpretation of the early crusading movement, I am indebted to P.E. Chevedden, “The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis,” *History* 93 (2008), pp. 181–200, and P. Cobb, *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (Oxford, 2014).

4 On the cult of St Nicholas broadly, see G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos: der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche, Texte und Untersuchungen* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1913 & 1917), K. Meisen, *Nikolauskult und Nikolausbrauch im Abendlande, eine kultgeographisch-volkskundliche Untersuchung* (Düsseldorf, 1931, repr. 1981), G. Cioffari, *S. Nicola nella critica storica* (Bari, 1987), and in English C.W. Jones, *Nicholas of Myra, Bari and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend* (Chicago IL, 1978). Further references are found at nn. 26 & 29, below.

5 The broadest perspective to be found in the existing literature is A. Pertusi, “Ai confini tra religione e politica: La contesa per le reliquie di S. Nicola tra Bari, Venezia e Genova,” *Quaderni medievali* 5 (1978), pp. 6–56.

events constituted important instances in an extended political, economic, and cultural turning point.

2 The Barese Initiative

Two authors wrote substantial accounts of the Barese expedition of 1087. This section will introduce those accounts and then evaluate how existing literature has reacted to the environment that produced them.

A monk, Niceforus of Bari, wrote the more commonly cited of the two accounts. His text has a complex history: three Latin versions of it survive, one of which was translated into Greek, and all of which appear to have been interpolated, one of them augmented considerably by an ambitious metaphrast.⁶ The extensive manuscript tradition of the different versions of Niceforus' text has been briefly summarized,⁷ but never comprehensively established. For clarity, I cite each individual version separately. His original (hypothetical) text dates to before 1089, since it appears to have been written before the death of Archbishop Ursus (1089), and because a text of c.1090, the *Adventus sancti Nicolai in Beneventum*, alludes to Niceforus' account.⁸ The basic outline shared by the various versions of Niceforus' text runs as follows:

6 The published versions, known after the origins of the manuscripts, are: (1) "Benevento": Benevento, Biblioteca Capitolare, Codice beneventano, ff. 251r-166v (later 12th century), ed. N. Putignani, *Istoria della vita, de' miracoli e della traslazione del gran taumaturgo S. Niccolo, Arcivescovo di Mira, padrone e protettore della città, e della provincia di Bari* (Napoli, 1771), pp. 551-65 (hereafter *NicB*; Putignani notes discrepancies with the Vatican text); (2) "Vatican": Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 6074, ff. 5v-10v (12th century), ed. N. Falconius, *Sancti confessoris pontificis et celeberrimi thaumaturgi Nicolai acta primigenia* (Napoli, 1751), pp. 131-8 (hereafter *NicV*) and also in F. Nitti di Vito, "Leggenda di S. Nicola," *Iapigia* 8 (1937), pp. 336-53 (which notes this MS's discrepancies with the Benevento version); (3) "Jerusalem": Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Gandav. lat. 289, pp. 219-61, ed. Socii Bollandiani, "Appendix ad Catalogum codicum hagiographicorum Bibliothecae Academiae et Civitatis Gandavensis," *Analecta Bollandiana* 4 (1885), pp. 169-92 (hereafter *NicJ*): this version is a lavish paraphrase in which the text is longer and rewritten in a higher register, incorporating verse; (4) "Greek": Grottaferrata, Biblioteca Statale del Monumento Nazionale, Cryptensis gr. B. β. iv (gr. 276), ff. 129v-154v (14th century) & Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. gr. 393, ff. 26r-35v (13th/14th century), ed. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, 1:435-49 (hereafter *NicGr*): though clearly based on the Vatican version, certain elements are excluded or added in the Greek text, for which see the notes to my summary, below (nn. 9-19). Nitti's text has been translated into English by Jones in *Biography of a Legend*, pp. 176-93, while the Greek version is available in English translation by J. McGinley and H. Mursurillo online at <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/nicholas-bari.asp> (accessed 2018 June 26).

7 Pertusi, "La contesa per le reliquie," pp. 25-6, nn. 49-50.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

A Barese fleet was anchored in Antioch on a trading visit; the crew resolved to stop at Myra on their return voyage in order to retrieve the relics of St Nicholas. News was circulating that a number of Venetians were also planning to remove the relics, so the Baresi sold up their wares as quickly as they could, and then departed.⁹ Upon arrival at Myra, the translators found that, apart from four custodians (perhaps clergymen), the citizens had all but abandoned the basilica and its environs for the citadel up the hill for fear of Turkish/Turkmen invaders.¹⁰ The Baresi first stated their claim to Nicholas on the basis of a vision received by the pope that instructed them to remove his relics.¹¹ Early attempts to bribe the custodians were rejected.¹² The custodians tried their best to prevent the translation, but eventually told the Baresi that they would find Nicholas' bones if they followed the scent of holy oil to the point where it emerged from the flagstones. Visions were reported to the effect that if the Myrans did not return to the plain from the citadel, they would lose Nicholas.¹³ A certain Matthew, one of the translators, began smashing away the floor until he found Nicholas' bones and their holy oil.¹⁴ The relics were removed intact (we are told), but an icon of the saint was left behind.¹⁵ Upon their release, the custodians made for the citadel and roused the townspeople, who rushed down to the boats to protest; the Baresi rebuffed them and sailed away.¹⁶ A handful of the translators purloined parts of the relics for personal use, causing Nicholas' displeasure and therefore delays to the return sailing; this created suspicion, and once the thieves confessed and the bones were reunited, the passage continued unhindered.¹⁷ Finally, upon arrival at Bari there was a contest between Dom Elias of the Benedictine Abbey of San Benedetto and Archbishop Ursus of the Cathedral for possession of the relics. The contest resulted in the deaths

9 *NicB*, I, pp. 551–2; *NicV*, I, pp. 131–2; *NicJ*, 8–11, pp. 172–4; *NicGr*, I, p. 435; cf. *JB*, p. 359.

10 *NicB*, II, p. 553; *NicV*, 2, p. 132; *NicJ*, 13–4, pp. 174–5; *NicGr* does not make this point; cf. *JB*, p. 360.

11 *NicB*, II, pp. 553–4; *NicV*, 2, p. 132; *NicJ*, 15, p. 175; *NicGr* III, p. 447; cf. *JB*, p. 361. It is unclear whether Gregory VII (d. 1085) or Victor III (d. 1087) was intended: the latter was not invested until May 1087, but it may possibly be a reference to Victor before his consecration (see in general H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* [Oxford, 1983]). For reasons discussed below (see n. 26), it is unlikely to refer to the contemporary Antipope Clement III.

12 *NicB*, III, p. 554; *NicV*, 3, p. 132; *NicJ*, 16, p. 176; *NicGr* makes no mention of bribery at this point, but does at x, pp. 441–2.

13 *NicB*, III–IV, p. 555; *NicV*, 3–4, p. 133; *NicJ*, 21, p. 178; *NicGr*, V, pp. 438–9.

14 *NicB*, IV, pp. 555–6; *NicV*, 4, p. 133; *NicJ*, 22–3, pp. 178–9; *NicGr*, VI, p. 439.

15 *NicB*, V, pp. 556–7; *NicV*, 5, pp. 133–4; *NicJ*, 23–4, pp. 179–80; *NicGr*, VII, p. 440.

16 *NicB*, V–VII, pp. 556–8; *NicV*, 5–7, p. 133–5; *NicGr*, IX–X, p. 441–2; cf. *NicJ*, 27–8, pp. 180–2.

17 *NicB*, VIII, pp. 558–9; *NicV*, 8, p. 135; *NicJ*, 31–2, pp. 182–3; *NicGr*, XI, pp. 442–3; cf. *JB*, p. 364.

of two young men on each side, but popular support for Elias prevailed.¹⁸ The account concludes with a list of miracles performed by Nicholas at Bari.¹⁹

John of Bari, archdeacon of the Cathedral under Archbishop Ursus, wrote a competing account at the same time.²⁰ His text attempted to garner support for the claims over Nicholas of Ursus' party, as opposed to Elias'. (These men seem to have been focal points for two mutually competitive factions in Bari at that time.) John of Bari's account is generally similar to Niceforus', except for his narrative of the translators' return to Bari, which is noticeably favourable to Ursus where Niceforus' is to Elias.

The translators, reports John, put into the port of St George, about five miles from Bari; the relics were then offloaded, housed in a wooden box that the men had constructed on board especially for them.²¹ At their arrival, John was himself with Archbishop Ursus at Trani, the latter having cancelled a planned visit to Jerusalem upon hearing the news of the relics' arrival.²² The bones were taken to the palace of the Catepan (a powerful reminder of the city's still recent Byzantine past), where Ursus apparently magnanimously granted them to Dom Elias.²³ Clearly, neither party was prepared to admit defeat in their memorialization of the translation.

There is no shortage of discursive scholarship on the resulting cult of St Nicholas at Bari, but what has been written so far is blinkered by a lack of appreciation for the city's and its cult's places in the wider Mediterranean world at that time.²⁴ Probably the single most prominent example of this tendency is the disproportionate amount of attention given to the question of whether this competition between the parties of Dom Elias and Archbishop Ursus reflects allegiances divided between the Gregorian Papacy and the Anti-Papacy of Clement III (Wibert of Ravenna) respectively. This debate arises mainly from two brief passages of an incidental nature in the contemporary Barese Latin *Annales* of Lupus Protospatharius. He mentions Clement as alive during the translation of 1087, and as having in fact come with Elias in 1089, when

18 *NicB*, xii, pp. 562–3; *NicV*, 12, p. 137–8; *NicJ*, 35–7, pp. 185–7; *NicGr*, xvii, p. 446.

19 *NicB*, xiv, pp. 364–8; *NicV*, 14, pp. 138–9; *NicJ*, 39–45, pp. 188–92; cf. *NicGr*, xx–xxii, pp. 447–9.

20 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 477, ff. 29–38 (later 12th century), ed. Nitti, "Leggenda," pp. 357–66 (hereafter *JB*). On John of Bari, see F. Babudri, "Le note autobiografiche di Giovanni Arcidiacono Barese," *Archivio Storico Pugliese* 2 (1949), pp. 134–46, and also H. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge MA, 1986), 111:740–5.

21 *NicJ*, p. 365.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *NicJ*, p. 366. The final section of John of Bari's account is translated in Jones, *Biography of a Legend*, pp. 195–7.

24 Cf. nn. 4–5, above.

the latter was consecrated as archbishop by Urban II following the death of Ursus.²⁵ Ursus should not be seen as leading a schismatic party in Bari: rather, it is likely that when writing about the period surrounding the hiatus between Victor III's death (16 September 1087) and Urban II's election (12 March 1088), Lupus simply pegged his chronology to the one ecclesiastical figure who still had any claim to power.²⁶ It is important to acknowledge this issue because of its prominence in previous literature, but it is regrettable that these fleeting references have claimed so much attention, at the expense of the wider significance of the events of 1087.

More broadly, Bari's place in the Mediterranean world reached a political (if less conclusively cultural) turning point in the later 11th century: the city had clung on as the last stronghold of the Byzantine Catepanate of Italy until its capture by the Normans on 15 April 1071. Dom Elias, who received the relics of Nicholas in Bari, had been the last ecclesiastical figure solemnized under the Byzantine administration earlier in 1071, when he became abbot of the Benedictine monastery of San Benedetto, which perhaps gained independence from its parent monastery, Monte Cassino, during his incumbency.²⁷ The city had also operated in the 1040s-50s as a recruiting centre for Byzantium's Frankish soldiers.²⁸ On the other hand, the presence in Bari of a Roman autocephalous bishopric from 1025 and the practice of Lombard Law both suggest the considerable presence of "Franks" in the city before the Norman conquest.²⁹

25 Ed. G. H. Pertz (in parallel columns with the anon. *Annales Barenses*), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum* V (Hannover, 1844), pp. 51–63, at p. 62, s.a. 1087 & 1089 ("vivente adhuc Clemente papa, qui fuerat Ravennae archiepiscopus" and "consecravit illic confessionem sancti Nicolai et Heliam archiepiscopum, qui venerat adhuc cum praedicto papa Clemente, et consecravit Brundusinam ecclesiam praefatus papa Urbanus.")

26 The misunderstanding derives from W. Holtzmann, "Studien zur Orientpolitik des Reformpapsttums und zur Entstehung des ersten Kreuzzuges", *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 22 (1924–25), pp. 167–199 (at 183–4). See further F. Nitti di Vito, *La represa gregoriana di Bari (1087–1105): e i suoi riflessi nel mondo contemporaneo politico e religioso* (Trani, 1942). Against this thesis: R.W. Dorin, "The Mystery of the Marble Man and His Hat: A Reconsideration of the Bari Episcopal Throne," *Florilegium* 25 (2008), pp. 29–52, and Pertusi, "La contesa," pp. 27–45. This explains my scepticism towards the idea that Niceforus was referencing a vision of Clement III in his justification of the translation of 1087: cf. n. 11, above.

27 Bloch, *Monte Cassino*, III:740–4.

28 J. Shepard, "The uses of the Franks in eleventh-century Byzantium," *Anglo-Norman Studies* XV (1993), pp. 275–305, at p. 289.

29 M. Spagnoletti, "La traslazione di S. Nicola di Mira e la storiografia barese," *Archivio storico pugliese* 39 (1986), pp. 101–32, p. 126; G.A. Loud, "Byzantine Italy and the Normans," in J.D. Howard-Johnston, ed., *Byzantium and the West, c.850-c.1200: Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 30th March – 1st April 1984* (Amsterdam, 1988), pp. 215–33.

The prevalence of Lombard names among the translators of 1087 has led one scholar to interpret the expedition as an assertion of Bari's independence from Byzantium in the new political situation of the 1080s.³⁰ This must remain a hypothesis, though, as it is now better appreciated that in the Middle Ages people often took names in the language of the dominant political or religious group in their community.³¹

This sketch of late 11th-century Bari is a picture full of grey areas. It appears that the city was undergoing a social transformation that began before the Norman conquest and continued after it, leaving it a community of ambiguous and shifting identities. In 1087, this evolving city embarked on an enterprise to take control of one element of its plural cultural patrimony: a saint's cult associated with the Greek Orthodox sphere of influence.

3 The View from the Lido

The expedition to Myra occurred in the context of the First Crusade, something that impacted heavily on the subsequent memorialization of the translation. Compared with its fellow maritime cities of Pisa and Genoa, Venice's investment in the First Crusade was minimal, its seemingly small force arriving in 1100, after the capture of Jerusalem. Venetian sources consequently say little on the topic, with one exception: the *Historia de translatione sanctorum magni Nicolai*, written by an unnamed monk of the Benedictine house of San Nicolò al Lido, and called here the *Lido Text*.³² The document is the only home-grown account of Venice's contribution to the First Crusade, but its primary purpose is in fact to record the translation of some remaining bones of St Nicholas of Myra, of a certain martyr Theodore, and of Nicholas' uncle, another Nicholas.³³ This section sets out the current state of scholarship on the *Lido Text* and introduces the content and structure of the source.

The almost complete neglect of the *Lido Text* is striking. It has been dismissed as simply a jealous (but vain) response to Bari's successful appropriation of

30 F. Babudri, "Sinossi critica dei traslatori Nicolaiani di Bari," *Archivio Storico Pugliese* 3 (1950), pp. 3–94.

31 For the problems of analysing "identity" on the basis of personal names, see J.A. Taylor, *Muslims in Medieval Italy: The Colony at Lucera* (Lanham MD, 2003), pp. 73–4.

32 Anonymous Monk of Lido, *Historia de translatione sanctorum magni Nicolai terra marique*, ed. in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux V* (1895) (hereafter *RHC Occ. V*), pp. 253–92 (the known manuscripts are listed on p. 253). On the Monastery and its Church, see F. Corner, *Notizie storiche delle chiese monasteri Venezia, e di Torcello, tratte dalle chiese veneziane, e torcellane* (Padua, 1763), pp. 50–60.

33 *Lido Text*, XI, p. 261.

St Nicholas,³⁴ evaluated solely as a source for the First Crusade,³⁵ considered quite briefly in the wider context of devotional activities in medieval Venice,³⁶ and (in a rather different scholarly context) examined at a philological level to ascertain whether its unnamed author should be identified with the Polish chronicler, Gallus Anonymus.³⁷

Apart from the editorial introduction in the *Récueil des Historiens des Croisades* of 1905,³⁸ Elena Bellomo's analysis of the *Lido Text* as a crusader source is, so far as I am aware, the only piece of scholarship entirely dedicated to the document. Her article does not intend to be a consideration of the translation narrative proper, and so the Venetian response to Bari's success in 1087 has languished in obscurity for over a century. Bellomo proposes that the text comprises a translation history inserted into an earlier, now lost Venetian account of the First Crusade, on the basis that the two subjects (the Crusade and the translation) seem too distinct from one another originally to have been recorded together, while she is also surprised not to find more miracles associated with the Crusade.³⁹ This hypothesis, even if correct, does not adequately explain why a monk of the Monastery of the Lido decided to compile a single, continuous account of the translation of Nicholas' relics and of the First Crusade. In fact, the author would have had perfectly good cause to treat both events together: the Venetian raid on Myra occurred as the city's fleet was *en route* to the Holy Land; both events occurred consecutively, and both could be presented as adornments to Venice's Christian glory.

The current study understands the *Lido Text* as the awkward product of a city already deeply involved in cross-cultural networks in the Mediterranean, as it contributed tentatively to a risky and violent enterprise in the Middle

34 Pertusi, "La contesa," pp. 48–54 and D.M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 71–4 are the only authors to devote any considerable attention to the topic, and both are extremely dismissive; P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 101–3, extraordinarily writes off the whole text in half a sentence ("early in the twelfth century [the Venetians] even went so far as to claim to have acquired for themselves a part of the relics of Nicolas from Myra along with the body of Nicolas' uncle" [p. 103]).

35 E. Bellomo, "The First Crusade and the Latin east as seen from Venice: the account of the *Translatio sancti Nicolai*," *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009), pp. 420–43.

36 A. Rigon, "Devozioni di lungo corso: lo scalo veneziano," in G. Ortalli & D. Puncuh (eds.), *Genova, il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Genova-Venezia, 10–14 marzo 2000* (Genoa, 2001) (= *Atti della Società di storia patria*, new series, XLII:1), pp. 395–412.

37 Most recently T. Jasiński, "Die Poetik in der Chronik des Gallus Anonymus," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43 (2010), pp. 373–92.

38 *RHC Occ.* V, pp. XLV–LII.

39 Bellomo, "*Translatio sancti Nicolai*," pp. 442–3.

East. It is argued here that, by analysing the text as a response to Bari's claims to Nicholas, it is possible to deduce important insights into Venice's complex and anxious attitudes towards the First Crusade.

The exact date of the *Lido Text* is uncertain, but it talks of Azzone II as still bishop of Fermo, thus placing it before c.1116, and therefore written when the events it describes were still well within living memory.⁴⁰ Of 46 chapters in total, a substantial core (Chapters IX–XXIX) addresses the removal of the relics from Myra, and the following chapters mainly the Venetians' contribution to the First Crusade (their arrival in Jerusalem, and their help in the capture of Haifa). An appendix recounts recent miracles performed by Nicholas. The text can be summarized as follows:

By popular acclamation, bishop Enrico of Castello and Giovanni Michiel, son of the Doge Vitale I, were put in charge of the crusading army and fleet.⁴¹ In a clear act of foreshadowing, the fleet assembled at the Basilica of St Nicholas before its departure.⁴² Having sailed down the Dalmatian coast and round the Peloponnese, the Venetians arrived in Rhodes, where they spent the winter of 1099–1100.⁴³ As well as apparent verbal discouragement from Alexios I Komnenos, the fleet encountered physical opposition in a Pisan attack of 50 ships, which was roundly defeated by the Venetians' 30.⁴⁴ Finally setting off from Rhodes for Jerusalem in spring 1100, Bishop Enrico managed to divert the fleet's passage to make first for Myra, where it was known that Turkish/Turkmen invaders had left the area around St Nicholas' Basilica in a state of chaos.⁴⁵

The fleet arrived in Myra. The canons convened in the church, which was in the deserted plain downhill from the citadel to which the Myrans had fled.⁴⁶ The custodians told the Venetians that the Baresi had not taken all of Nicholas' relics. To coerce the custodians into revealing the relics to them, the Venetian leaders drew up their troops outside the building, as if preparing them for battle.⁴⁷ The custodians informed them where to find the bones of Theodore "the martyr" and Nicholas' uncle and namesake, both identified by a Greek

40 *Lido Text*, "Miracula," V, p. 285; Bellomo, "Translatio Sancti Nicolai," p. 423; Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, p. 521, dates it to 1116; this is presumably the authority on which D. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, p. 71, also attributes the text to 1116.

41 *Lido Text*, II, p. 255.

42 *Ibid.*, III, p. 256.

43 *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 256–7.

44 *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 257–8.

45 *Ibid.*, VIII–IX, pp. 259–60. The text states that the fleet had begun to sail first for Smyrna, far to the north, before turning back and making for Myra. Such a significant disruption to their course for Jerusalem seems most unlikely; perhaps the author was mistaken.

46 *Ibid.*, X, p. 260–1.

47 *Ibid.*, X–XII, p. 258–62.

epitaph.⁴⁸ After recovering these remains, the translators followed the holy scent of the saint, and were encouraged by a vision of him outside the basilica; they kept searching until they recovered some fragments of his bones in a pool of bitumen. These remains, too, were apparently commemorated in an inscription reading “Here lies the great Bishop Nicholas, glorious in his miracles by land and sea.”⁴⁹ The local people were devastated by the news that they had lost their patron, and came down from the citadel with their archbishop to try to prevent the translation.⁵⁰ Out of none too much generosity, the Venetians returned a box they had found at the altar, and paid the inhabitants one hundred *nomismata* (“aureos Byzantios”) for repair costs.⁵¹ News was taken to Venice of the removal of the relics.⁵²

There follows an account of the Venetian arrival in Jerusalem in fulfilment of their crusading vows, and their assistance in the capture of the city of Haifa.⁵³ The main narrative concludes with the enthusiastic reception of the relics back in Venice, which were ultimately assigned to Nicholas’ eponymous church on the Lido, from which the fleet had first set out. The text ends with the customary list of (recent) miracles performed by the saint.⁵⁴

As will be evident from this summary, there are various episodes in the text that strikingly mirror elements of the 1087 translation narratives: these coincidences are examined in the next section of this study. Such close textual engagement suggests that the author intended systematically to displace Bari’s claims to Nicholas’ cult in favour of Venice.

According to Niceforus and John of Bari, Venice’s pretensions to the relics of St Nicholas could be dated back at least as early as 1087. Earlier that year, a group of Baresi traders had travelled to Antioch to sell grain and other unspecified wares; the Baresi sources claim that these traders had already planned to take Nicholas’ relics when they heard that a group of Venetians, readily equipped with metal tools for prizing open the tomb, hoped to do the same. Having rushed their trading expedition to a conclusion, the Baresi hurried to Myra, beating the Venetian fleet.⁵⁵ This claim might be fabrication, designed to score points against a mutually competitive city; on the other hand, it might in fact be true, since Niceforus was writing somewhere between 1087–89,

48 Ibid., XIV–XV, pp. 263–4.

49 Ibid., XVI–XX, pp. 264–6. The text of the inscription is given in Latin at ch. xx, p. 266.

50 Ibid., XXIV, pp. 267–8.

51 Ibid., XXV, p. 268.

52 Ibid., XXVIII, p. 269.

53 Ibid., XXX–XLII, pp. 270–8.

54 Ibid., XLIV–XLVI, pp. 278–81 and *Miracula*, pp. 282–92.

55 *NicB*, I, pp. 551–2; *NicV*, I, pp. 131–2; *NicJ*, 8–11, pp. 172–4; *JB*, p. 359.

meaning that he cannot have included this retrospectively with the knowledge of Venice's expedition of 1100.⁵⁶ The Venetian sources make no mention of this, but then they might be expected to gloss over such a failure.

Whatever the truth, in 1087, Antioch was clearly acting as a communication hub for Mediterranean traders. Recently conquered by the Seljuk Turks but for much of the previous decade under the power of the Armenian commander and former Byzantine general Philaretos Brachamias, the city was a communication hub in a fluid political situation.⁵⁷ It was the sort of place where a group of grain traders could hear news that Turkish conquests in southeastern Anatolia had opened up opportunities for acquiring some valuable spiritual capital.

4 Dialogues

The wide distribution of the Baresi translation narratives is testament to the significance of the event's impact. In particular, the prompt creation of a Greek version of the Vatican version of Niceforus' text, perhaps in Constantinople, suggests both that this was an event of far more than localized interest, and that a copy of the Vatican version (at the very least) was in some degree of circulation. Close examination of the *Lido Text's* content, structure, and language reveals marked similarities to the various versions of Niceforus' text. This suggests that the Lido's scriptorium had access to a copy of his text, in one form or another, in the early 12th century. (Of course, many features are by extension also shared with John of Bari's text, although it seems from the manuscript distribution that Niceforus' met with the wider readership.⁵⁸)

Table 15.1 presents these similarities schematically, noting seven especially striking points at which the *Lido Text* "answers" a statement in Niceforus' account. To turn now in detail to these parallels, first of all, on 27 May 1100, the Venetian fleet left Rhodes, where it had spent the winter, for Myra and ultimately for Jerusalem.⁵⁹ The *Lido Text* claims that more than "five hundred" Turks

56 For the date, see n. 8, above.

57 Particularly relevant are C.J. Yarnley, "Philaretos: Armenian Bandit or Byzantine General?" *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, New Series, 9 (1972), pp. 331–53 and S.B. Edgington, "Antioch: Medieval City of Culture" in K. Ciggaar & M. Metcalf (eds.), *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean 1: Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 247–59.

58 Cf. n. 6, above.

59 *Lido Text*, VIII–IX, p. 259.

TABLE 15.1 Parallels between the Baresi and Venetian translation accounts.

Niceforus	<i>Lido Text</i>
The translation occurred during the reign of the Emperor Alexios, when he was facing trouble from the Turks and Normans (<i>NicGr</i> , I, p. 435).	Turkish/Turkmen attacks had led the people of Myra to seek refuge in the citadel, about two miles from the town (x, p. 260).
There were four custodians at the tomb, who displayed great anxiety at the Baresi (<i>NicB</i> , II, p. 553; <i>NicV</i> , 2, p. 132; <i>NicJ</i> , 13–4, pp. 174–5; cf. <i>JB</i> , p. 360, for three custodians).	The custodians at the tomb (the number is not specified) expressed their unworthiness <i>vis à vis</i> the Venetians, whose translation attempt they purportedly endorsed (x, p. 260).
The Baresi made offers of gold to, and threats against, the custodians in an attempt to acquire the relics (<i>NicB</i> , III, p. 554; <i>NicV</i> , 3, p. 132; <i>NicJ</i> , 16, p. 176).	Bishop Enrico and Giovanni Michiel drew up their men up for battle before Myra, to frighten the custodians into giving them the relics (xII, pp. 261–2).
The custodians told the Baresi that they could find the relics where the holy oil emerged (<i>NicB</i> , III–IV, p. 555; <i>NicV</i> , 3–4, p. 133; <i>NicJ</i> , 21, p. 178; <i>NicGr</i> , v, pp. 438–9).	The custodians did their best to divert the Venetians, but it was clear that to find Nicholas' body, the translators had to follow the saint's holy scent (presumably from the oil) (xVI, p. 264).
Visions had occurred to the effect that if the Myrans could not return to their city, they would lose the relics (<i>Ibid.</i>).	A vision of Nicholas was seen above the site where he was presumed to be buried (xVII, pp. 264–5).
The relics were found; the custodians acknowledged defeat and asked why Nicholas would abandon them (<i>NicB</i> , v–VII, pp. 556–8; <i>NicV</i> , 5–7, p. 133–5; <i>NicGr</i> , IX–X, p. 441–2; cf. <i>NicJ</i> , 27–8, pp. 180–2).	The Archbishop of Myra came down to the shore and delivered an emotive plea to the Venetians asking why Nicholas had abandoned his flock, and why the Venetians had caused so much damage (xxIV, pp. 267–8).
The Baresi justified their actions on the grounds of the visions, and the fact that they had left behind an icon and the holy liquid for the locals (<i>NicB</i> , v, pp. 556–7; <i>NicV</i> , 5, pp. 133–4; <i>NicJ</i> , 23–4, pp. 179–80; <i>NicGr</i> , VII, p. 440).	The Venetians justified their destruction by returning a box they had found in the altar, and by giving the custodians a hundred <i>nomismata</i> for rebuilding the site (xxV, p. 268).

(a figure not to be taken literally), closely surrounding the area, had forced the Myrans from their desolated town up into the citadel, about two miles away. This mirrors the Greek translation of Niceforus' account of 1087 (based otherwise very closely on the Vatican version), which places the translation against the backdrop of Alexios I Komnenos' struggles against the Turks (and Normans).⁶⁰ Those citizens who rushed down to the town to confront the Venetians apparently lamented that Nicholas, their protector, was evidently leaving them in their lowly state for Venice: "We know indeed that we are unworthy to see you with our impudent eyes, and to hold your holy bones with our polluted hands."⁶¹ The various versions of Niceforus' text mention that a prophecy had occurred to three men in Myra that if the citizens did not return from their hillside refuge to reoccupy the town, then they would lose the relics of Nicholas.⁶² John of Bari does not mention this prophecy, but states simply that the devastation of Myra was by the will of God.⁶³ The *Lido Text* thus responds to these claims with its own alleged speech of the Myrans. The claims of both groups of translators amount to the same thing: by being unable to defend themselves against Turkish invasion, the locals had forfeited their right to their patron saint.

The Venetian account continues with explicit refutation of the Barese claim to have taken all of Nicholas' remains. The custodians then claimed that the Baresi had taken some, but not all of the relics, and that the Venetians were welcome to take the rest. The Venetians suspected that they were being shown the wrong tomb: threatened with torture, the custodians protested that no one truly knew what had happened to the relics after an apparent abortive attempt by Emperor Basil I to take them for himself. (The tomb itself may not always have been in the same place, but was likely at this time housed in a side-aisle projecting southwards from the east end of the nave.⁶⁴) This parallels the claim in Niceforus' text that the custodians warned the translators that no one else had previously succeeded in removing Nicholas' bones.⁶⁵ The author of the *Lido Text* seized on this point to assert Venice's purportedly stronger claim to the relics.

60 Ibid., IX–X, pp. 259–60; *NicGr*, I, p. 435.

61 *Lido Text*, x, p. 260 ("Scimus quidem nos indignos, ut te lascivis oculis videamus, et ut ossa sancta tua pollutis manibus teneamus").

62 *NicB*, III–IV, p. 555; *NicV*, 3–4, p. 133; *NicJ*, 21, p. 178; *NicGr*, V, pp. 438–9.

63 *JB*, p. 360.

64 *Lido Text*, XI, p. 261. On the Church and Nicholas' grave, see P. Niewöhner, "Neues zum Grab des Hl. Nikolaus von Myra," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 46 (2003), pp. 119–34 (esp. p. 121–6), and R.M. Harrison, "Churches and Chapels of Central Lycia," *Anatolian Studies* 13 (1963), pp. 117–51, at pp. 119–24.

65 *NicB*, III–IV, p. 555; *NicV*, 3–4, p. 133; *NicJ*, 21, p. 178; *NicGr*, V, pp. 438–9.

In 1087, a vision was said to have come from St Nicholas (in the Jerusalem version and John of Bari's account to a man called Eustasius) to warn that certain of the translators had stolen for themselves parts of his relics, thus causing bad weather and sailing delays near Perdicca. Once these pieces had been reunited with the body, it is said, the fleet was able to continue unhindered, as Nicholas was "whole" again.⁶⁶ This episode stakes the Barese claim to possess Nicholas' relics in their entirety; the statement of the custodians in the *Lido Text* that the Baresi had taken some but left others of the relics undermines this completely. According to a study of the relics housed in the Church of St Nicholas on the Lido in 1992, the Venetians were neither lying, nor mistaken: it was concluded that the small, white bone fragments found in the casket belonged to the same body kept in Bari, though they were mixed with other, foreign pieces of bone.⁶⁷ The fragmentary nature of the remains was concluded to reflect the *Lido Text's* claim that they were recovered from a congealed mass of bitumen deep under the basilica floor, while trauma to the base of the torso seemed to reflect the damage inflicted by Matthew and his axe, as related in Niceforus' narrative.⁶⁸ There is therefore a strong case for taking the claims of the *Lido Text* more seriously than they hitherto have been, although it must be said that the text's intrinsic interest ought to be sufficient in itself to warrant scholarly attention.

In the accounts of the expeditions of both 1087 and 1100, there is also a clear parallel to be found in the role of holy oil in guiding the translators. The Baresi were told to search for the place where this oil emerged in order to locate Nicholas' body, which apparently emitted it.⁶⁹ In 1100, the custodians were unable to dupe the Venetians into taking the wrong bones because the translators knew to search for the source of a holy scent in the basilica, seemingly a reference to the same substance.⁷⁰ Each group of translators referenced the oil as a sign of Nicholas' willingness to leave Myra: it was his way of guiding the Baresi and Venetians to his relics, and thereby granting them permission to take him.

Addressing the outcome of the expedition, the *Lido Text* attributes a reflective speech to the (unnamed) archbishop of Myra. He descended from the citadel with the people, and tried to rationalize why Nicholas might have deserted them, concluding that the Venetians must have proved more faithful, and thus more deserving. But the archbishop also asks rather penetratingly

66 *NicB*, VIII, pp. 558–9; *NicV*, 8, p. 135; *NicJ*, 31–2, pp. 182–3; *NicGr*, XI, pp. 442–3; *JB*, p. 364.

67 L.G. Paludet, *Ricognizione delle reliquie di S. Nicolò* (Vicenza, 1994), pp. 16–37.

68 *Lido Text*, xviii–xix, p. 265; Paludet, *Ricognizione*, p. 36; for Matthew, see n. 14, above.

69 *NicB*, iv–v, pp. 555–6; *NicV*, 4–5, pp. 133–4; *NicJ*, 22–3, pp. 178–9; *NicGr*, V, p. 438.

70 *Lido Text*, xvii, pp. 264–5.

why the Venetians' vandalism was necessary: "Why have you ruined this place, and shattered the altars [...]? Although the Turks destroyed this town, and destroyed our great hope of our safety thus far, you, who are Christians, have sent us and the whole of Greece to our deaths."⁷¹ In the ensuing chapter, the author explains that the Venetians returned a box that they had found at the altar, as well as leaving a hundred gold *nomismata* for the restoration of the site.⁷² It is remarkable that the author should choose to relate a speech like this, since it seems to compromise the Venetians' position. This may be as much a reflection of the author's own anxieties as the archbishop's words.

The Baresi texts ask similar questions, though much more briefly. In 1087, the custodians had been held at sword-point in the Basilica until the relics were recovered. Once released, the archbishop told those in the citadel what had happened; running down to the ships, they asked the Baresi how they could justify so violently removing their patron (something no one else had effected).⁷³ Here, the Myrans are allowed to ask the question only so that the Baresi can answer that it is Nicholas' own will to move to a new home, but the same anxiety over the violence of the expedition is certainly present.⁷⁴ In the Venetian case in particular, the author of this crusader history may have felt greater anxiety from the need to articulate a nuanced justification for the translators' actions: their violence at Myra would certainly undermine any pretence that their crusading actions were in defence of the Christians of the East.

In brief, the author of the *Lido Text* appears to have engaged closely with a Barese source, probably a version of Niceforus' account, which allowed him to stake Venice's own claim to Nicholas through systematic one-upmanship. On the whole, the *Lido Text*, though a confident statement of Venice's pious deeds in the eastern Mediterranean in 1100, also has a strong atmosphere of anxiety and self-justification. This points to the sensitive role it had to play as both a translation narrative and a crusader history.

5 Trends and Turning Points

To address now the wider context of the two translations, Venice's political and economic fortunes were growing ever stronger in the later 11th century. By 1100,

71 Ibid., xxiv, p. 268 ("Quare locum istum destruxistis, altaria confregistis [...]? Quamvis Turci civitatem istam destruxerunt, magnam spem salutis adhuc nobis dimiserunt; sed vos, qui christiani estis, nos et totam Graeciam mortificastis").

72 Ibid., xxv, p. 268.

73 *NicB*, v–vi, pp. 556–7; *NicV*, 5–6, p. 133; *NicGr*, ix, p. 441; cf. *NicJ*, 27, pp. 180–1.

74 *NicB*, vii, pp. 557–8; *NicV*, 7, pp. 134–5; *NicGr*, x, pp. 441–2; cf. *NicJ*, 28, pp. 181–2.

the balance of power in the Byzantine-Venetian partnership had moved in the latter's favour. In 1092 (or possibly 1082), Alexios I Komnenos had granted the city unprecedented commercial privileges and quarters on the Golden Horn. This was probably to guarantee the presence of a naval bulwark against the Turkish invasions in the Aegean, though perhaps also to counter Norman interests. By participating in the uncertainties of the First Crusade, Venice might risk jeopardizing its privileged position, from which it was happily conducting trade with both the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimid Caliphate.⁷⁵ This helps to explain why Venice's contribution to the expedition was so little, so late. Genoa, meanwhile, had no such vested interests in the eastern Mediterranean, while Pisa's small but keener contribution to the Crusade reflected its intermediate status, more entrenched than Genoa, but as yet without privileges from Byzantium.⁷⁶ In short, I would argue that the more involved a maritime city already was by 1095 in intercultural, trans-Mediterranean trade, the higher the stakes became should it choose to involve itself in the uncertainties of the First Crusade.

It is now broadly recognized that the First Crusade was the product of the territorial collapse of 11th-century Byzantium as much as it was also the product of the Reform Papacy.⁷⁷ Immediately before the First Crusade, both the Eastern Empire and the papacy found it in their interests to plan for an expedition from the West to counter the growing threat of the Seljuk Turks and Turkmen groups in Anatolia. Gregory VII was in direct contact with Michael VII Doukas as early as 1073, discussing precisely that possibility. At Piacenza in March 1095, the theme was reprised as Alexios requested Urban II's help; the Turkish occupation of Anatolia had proceeded at speed from Manzikert on Lake Van in 1071 to Nicaea by the First Crusade.⁷⁸ While it is almost certain that Jerusalem was always the Crusade's ultimate goal, recovering Anatolia for Christendom was arguably its secondary objective.⁷⁹

75 Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, Ch. 5 (pp. 68–83); P. Frankopan, "Byzantine Trade Privileges to Venice in the Eleventh Century: The Chrysobull of 1092," *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), pp. 135–60. Not all scholars have placed the bull in 1092: see Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, p. 40, for a conventional date of 1082.

76 See the studies cited in nn. 2–3, above.

77 P. Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), and especially J. Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine attitudes to the west in the 10th and 11th centuries," in Howard-Johnston, ed., *Byzantium and the West*, pp. 67–118.

78 H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's "crusading" plans of 1074," in B.Z. Kedar, H.E. Mayer and R.C. Smail (eds.), *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 27–40.

79 H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Urban II's preaching of the First Crusade," *History* 55 (1970), pp. 177–88.

The two translations of St Nicholas' relics that occurred in 1087 and 1100 exemplify an important turning point in the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and those cities of Italy that continued to live with the imperial legacy. The period in which these translations occurred saw the dramatic collapse of Byzantium's political hegemony in Anatolia (and in southern Italy), unprecedented economic concessions in favour of Venice, and an explosion of Latin Christendom that included the First Crusade. The translations themselves were inextricably bound up in all of these changing circumstances: the balance of power in the Mediterranean world shifted in a fundamental way in the later 11th century, and the translations of St Nicholas offer one way of indexing this transformation.

A document from France, also addressing the movement of relics, corroborates these conclusions. This is the *Acta translationis SS. reliquiarum in monasterium Cormaricense* (hereafter the *Cormery Text*).⁸⁰ Written by Guillelmus Ludovicus, a monk of Cormery, the text relates the movement to the monastery of a large, eclectic selection of relics. These were partially purchased from and partially awarded by Alexios I Komnenos in return for the monk's service as a sort of army chaplain in Nicomedia during the Seljuk invasions.⁸¹ The *Cormery Text* says nothing of the Council of Clermont, but does mention that Alexios had sent letters to many rulers in Western Europe begging for help against the ravages of the Turks.⁸² By Guillelmus' arrival at Nicomedia, the army had managed to secure the area, and the population gradually began to return from their hideouts in the caves and hollows around the city to reoccupy it.⁸³ The parallels with Myra's political (and even topographical) situation are clear: the relics came to the West as a consequence of the Turkish invasions of Anatolia.

It is striking that most cases of relic transfer from Byzantium before 1204 occurred through Constantinople, usually as a gift to a figure from France or the Holy Roman Empire.⁸⁴ Furthermore, those relics taken to Cormery were not of a late antique saint (as in the case of Nicholas), but mostly biblical relics, such as parts of the True Cross, relics from the Sepulchre and Calvary, and part of

80 J. Shepard, "How St. James the Persian's Head was brought to Cormery: A Relic Collector around the time of the First Crusade," in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. L. M. Hoffmann and A. Monchizadeh (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 287–335; Latin text ed. pp. 298–302, tr. pp. 302–9.

81 *Cormery Text*, IV (pp. 299–302, tr. pp. 304–8).

82 *Ibid.*, II–III (p. 298, tr. pp. 303–4).

83 *Ibid.*, IV (p. 299, tr. p. 304).

84 H.A. Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004), pp. 283–314.

the Nativity Palm.⁸⁵ Venice is the major exception to these patterns. Around the turn of the 12th century, the city began to acquire by agreement or force the remains of a number of saints: Mark, from Alexandria (1094); Nicholas, from Myra (1100); Stephen, from Constantinople (in the early years of the century); and the martyr Isidore, from Chios (1125).⁸⁶ Venice's concern with Nicholas must therefore be understood as part of an acquisitive trend.

Venice and Bari's aggressive pursuit of Nicholas probably also reflects the especially strong shared heritage that these two cities enjoyed with the Byzantine world: this made them aware of where the richest pickings in Byzantine saints were to be had. The self-same circumstances of territorial collapse that opened up these relics also helped to precipitate the First Crusade. Such a context is far bigger than that for which scholarship on the Barese tradition has hitherto allowed; but even more importantly, it helps to locate and explain the *Lido Text*.

6 Conclusions

This study suggests that in 1100, Venice saw the opportunity to solve two sensitive problems with one single text. To the Venetians, already deeply involved in profitable trade with multiple Mediterranean polities, the First Crusade must have looked initially like a risky enterprise. Their caution in 1100 suggests that they could not foresee how integral the crusading movement would become to their fortune. On the other hand, the collapse of imperial authority in Anatolia had left the community of Myra, centred around Nicholas, very vulnerable. This allowed Venice to pursue its (perhaps long-standing) pretensions to the cult of St Nicholas, and loot the church one further time. The contemporary context of Turkish invasion also led Alexios to usher the Venetians into the Aegean with fresh and unprecedented economic privileges. All of this was attendant to the on-going expansion of Latin Christendom in the Mediterranean that began in Sicily and Iberia in the mid-11th century, and which found its consummation in the First Crusade. The other major Mediterranean event of 1087, the Pisan and Genoese attack on al-Mahdiyya, was part of precisely this same trend.⁸⁷

85 *Cormery Text*, IV (pp. 299–302, tr. pp. 304–8).

86 Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, p. 25.

87 Cf. nn. 2–3, above; for the raid on al-Mahdiyya, see A.C. Grant, "Pisan Perspectives: The *Carmen in victoriam* and Holy War, c.1000–1150," *The English Historical Review* 131 (2016), pp. 983–1009.

Sometime in the decade-and-a-half following the Venetian translation, an anonymous monk of the Monastery of San Nicolò al Lido tried to make sense of this expedition in a way that would serve the greater glory of Venice. For the contest over Nicholas' remains that formed the centrepiece of his text, the author was able to draw on a good knowledge of one or more Baresi accounts to construct a systematic story of one-upmanship that boasted the "final" translation of Nicholas' remains. Around this narrative, he wrapped the details of Venice's tentative participation in the First Crusade. The result was a unitary text that offered a forceful yet anxious solution to an awkward situation, in which Venice found itself on the back foot *vis-à-vis* both Bari, and the keenest of the first crusaders.

Changing Profiles of Monastic Founders in Constantinople, From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: The Case of the Theotokos Pammakaristos Monastery in Context

Elif Demirtiken

1 Introduction

The image of a monk – and to a lesser degree that of a nun – was a familiar one in Byzantine society at any given time, as was the silhouette of a monastery in the landscape. Yet, with few exceptions, modern scholarship on the monastics and monasteries of Constantinople has tended to focus on the early and middle Byzantine periods.¹ Numerous scholarly works devoted to monasteries in the capital display a tendency to treat individual buildings, in most cases the remaining *katholika*, while research regarding the urban history of Constantinople occasionally provides hints about the monastic topography of the capital, sometimes also covering the later period.² Concerning monastics, scholarly interest provides general, thus mostly brief, surveys of monasticism,

1 Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, 350–850* (Cambridge, 2007); Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* (Cambridge, 1995); Margaret Mullett, ed. *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast, 2007); John Thomas and A.C. Hero, eds. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' "Typika" and Testaments* (Washington, DC., 2000) (hereafter *BMFD*); Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995); Peter Charanis, "The Monk as an Element in Byzantine Society," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 68–84.

2 This is understandably the case for most final reports of excavation and restoration works done on the remaining Byzantine churches in modern Istanbul. Some exceptional examples offer more historical contextualization, such as Robert Ousterhout, "Architecture, Art and Komnenian Patronage at the Pantokrator Monastery," in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden, 2001), pp. 133–50 and *ibidem*, "The Decoration of the Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii): Evidence Old and New," in *On İkinci ve On Üçüncü Yüzyıllarda Bizans Dünyasında Değişim / Change in the Byzantine World in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, eds. Ayla Ödekan, Engin Akyürek, and Nevra Necipoğlu (Istanbul, 2010), pp. 432–9 and Holger Klein, Robert Ousterhout, Brigitte Pitarakis, eds. *Kariye Camii, Yeniden / The Kariye Camii Reconsidered* (Istanbul, 2011).

which usually stop in 1204; on the other hand, one finds illuminating research on patrons of monasteries or case studies on monastic individuals.³ This picture is no doubt driven by the available source material and also related to the interregnum period that Byzantine Constantinople experienced after the Fourth Crusade. However, at least 51 recorded monuments (see Fig. 16.2) with no fewer than 66 known foundation/re-foundation/restoration activities in Constantinople in the period c.1080–1340 call for a more comprehensive study to understand better the factors that determined its transformation.⁴ Drawing such a holistic picture of monastic topography of the capital has merit not only to detect continuities and changes concerning monastic foundation activities, but also to contextualize them within larger socio-political trends or turning points of the period in question.

There is no doubt that the personal reasons for founding pious institutions varied. The source material is partial and uneven – in the best case, the *katholikon* and *parekklesion* of the monastery survive, and the written evidence consists of the *typikon*, dedicatory or funerary epigrams surviving *in situ* or in collections, narrative sources, and their founders' correspondences – making it difficult to recognise overarching patterns of intention and reason. Still, the surviving *typika* reveal the founders' hope for salvation through their burials in a monastery where monks or nuns pray for the souls of the founders and select members of their families. While for many founders and monastics, who took the vows and settled (and were buried) in these foundations, it was a genuine act to renounce the world for an angelic life, other, earthlier concerns, especially for the foundations of the imperial family and aristocracy, need to be mentioned. Monasteries functioned as places of refuge, retirement, and

3 For instance, Hero's research illuminates the thirteenth–fourteenth century monastic setting in Byzantium. Angela Constantinides Hero, "Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 9 (1985), 119–47; eadem, *A Woman's Spiritual Quest for Spiritual Guidance: The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina* (Massachusetts, 1986); eadem, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia* (Massachusetts, 1994) and *Letters of Gregory Akindynos* (Washington, D.C., 1983). Concerning the Palaiologan period monasticism, Alice-Mary Talbot's research is exceptional, focusing on individuals and scrutinizing general patterns. Alice-Mary Talbot, "A Comparison of the Monastic Experience of Byzantine Men and Women," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985), 1–20; eadem, "Women's Space in Byzantine Monasteries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998), 113–27; eadem, "Founders' Choices: Monastery Site Selection in Byzantium," in *Founders and Refounders*, pp. 43–62.

4 Raymond Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantine 1, Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, 3: Églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969); Vassilios Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantinopel, 1204–1328: Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau and Neubau von Profan – und Sakralbauten* (Wiesbaden, 1994).

detainment, as well as bearers of founders' family names, which often survived longer than the *oikos* itself.⁵

In terms of an act of patronage, on the other hand, they were materialized representations of unequal relationships between the founder and the audience/viewer of commissioned works.⁶ Founding a monastery was obviously a more expensive endeavour,⁷ which, in return, left a more visible imprint on the cityscape and thus reached a wider segment of the population.⁸ Religious monuments were, for example, frequently recorded as one of the main characteristics of Constantinople, along with its wealth, high walls, strong towers, and rich palaces, recorded in awe by Crusaders such as Geoffrey of Villehardouin and Robert of Clari around 1204, as well as by the Russian travellers in the 14th and 15th centuries.⁹ Monasteries constructed the city's sacred geography and their patrons, in return, were praised for their pious foundations.¹⁰ On the other hand, a founder's lavish and ambitious projects, whether religious or

5 Alice-Mary Talbot, "Founders' Choices," pp. 43–62; Michel Kaplan, "Why were Monasteries Founded?" in *Founders and Refounders*, pp. 28–42.

6 Margaret Mullett, "Byzantium: a friendly society?," *Past and Present* 118 (1987), 3–28.

7 Their difference from minor arts or books lies in their grandeur and monumentality. Liz James, "Making a Name: Reputation and Imperial Founding and Refounding in Constantinople," in *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. Lioba Theis, Margaret Mullett, and Michael Grünbart (Vienna, 2012), pp. 63–72.

8 Founding such pious institutions at the capital, the political, cultural and social hub of the state, must have been even more expensive and ambitious. Other urban monastic foundations and the rural ones should be evaluated on different terms.

9 Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *Memoirs or Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade and the Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. Frank T. Marzials, (London, 1908). He described Constantinople for the first time on p. 31: "[...] in all the world so rich a city; and [...] the high walls and strong towers that enclosed it round about, and the rich palaces, and mighty churches of which there were so many that no one would have believed it who had not seen it with his eyes-and the height and the length of that city which above all others was sovereign." Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople / The Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. Peter Noble (Cambridge, 2005). In his account (80–112, pp. 97–111), beside the Golden Gate, the hippodrome, the palaces of Boukoleon and Blacharnai, and the churches of Hagia Sophia, Hagia Maria in Blachernai and Hagioi Apostoloi, Robert of Clari repeatedly described the wealth of the city, which equaled to "the fifty richest cities in the world" with its "the richest palaces and richest abbeys." As expected, the religious monuments feature even more on the Russian pilgrims' accounts. George Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984); *ibidem*, "Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), 93–108.

10 Robert Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem," in *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow, 2006), pp. 98–116. For instance, Gregorios of Kyprios praises Michael VIII Palaiologos for his restoration of monasteries, convents and churches, though without naming any of them specifically. Gregory of Cyprus, *Laudatio Michaelis Palaeologi*, PG 142, col. 377c.

profane, could, at times, be subjected to criticism. Ioannes Oxeites, for example, criticized the Komnenian clan for building entire cities within the city.¹¹ These “cities” probably included, among many other buildings, monasteries.¹² Thus, monastic foundations always symbolized and reminded the viewer of the power of the patron. However, whether or not the audience approved of what they saw was another matter.

There were even closer and more intense dynamics between and among monastic founders, than between founder and lay audience. Catia Galatariotou lists bonds of lay kinship as one of the major motivations for aristocratic foundations.¹³ Vlada Stanković expands on the intentions of Komnenian (imperial) monastic founders. By contextualising their endeavours in their cultural, social, and historical settings, he argues that, in addition to the well-attested need for salvation, burial, and commemoration, the founders also intended their monasteries to express their ideological positions and their status within the ruling family.¹⁴

Furthermore, the proliferation of monasteries and the visibility they provided the founders cannot be explained without a cross-examination of the patrons’ background and the contemporary changes in the administrative and social structures of the state. After all, who was able to commission such a building and who was not is a question about social structures rather than

11 Paul Gautier, “Diatribes de Jean l’Oxite contre Alexis Ier Comnène,” *Revue des études byzantines* 28 (1970), 41. The same passage includes the abundance of possessions and extravagance of foundations: [...] και κτημάτων περιβολαί και αἱ ἐν τῷ πόλει πόλεις και κτισμάτων ὑπερβολαί και τὰ πολλὰ βασιλεία [...].

12 Or, at least some monastic complexes often included a secular living quarter as evident in the *typikon* of the monastery of Theotokos Kecharitomene in the 12th century. In §79, Eirene Doukaina lists her wishes as to what should be done about the “sumptuous buildings newly built in the monastery.” She makes clear that when the empress was alive Anna Komnene lived there in the buildings adjacent to the wall between the Kecharitomene and the Philanthropos (which should be demolished after Anna’s death), and she should be given full possession of the monastery. For these and other arrangements about the living quarters, see Paul Gautier, “Le Typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitoménè,” *Revue des Études Byzantines* 43 (1985), 5–165, especially lines 2089–2126 on pp. 137, 139; Robert Jordan, trans., “Kecharitomene: Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople,” in *BMPD*, pp. 649–724, here pp. 706–7.

13 Catia Galatariotou, “Byzantine Ktetorika Typika: a Comparative Study,” *Revue des Études Byzantines* 45 (1987), 77–138, here 95–105.

14 Vassiliki Dimitropoulou, “Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople,” in *Founders and Refounders*, pp. 63ff. hypothesises that Komnenian female monastic foundations might be expressions of rivalry. Vlada Stanković, “Comnenian Monastic Foundations in Constantinople: Questions of Method and Context,” *Belgrade Historical Review* 2 (2011), 47–73.

individuals. For the long 12th century, the new Komnenian system – which, according to Ioannes Zonaras, was nothing but Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118) becoming the *oikodespotes* of the empire¹⁵ – established a segment of *sebastoi* as the top stratum of the state administration, favouring the emperor's kin by blood and marriage above any dignities.¹⁶ Paul Magdalino already suggested 20 years ago that this mainly aristocratic building program was perhaps the urban reflexion of Alexios' structural transformation of the Byzantine state.¹⁷ As will be argued below, a similar correlation can be observed between the (further) changes in the state structure and monumental patronage in the capital by an unprecedented number of individuals from diverse social strata for the early Palaiologan period.

With all the above-mentioned considerations in mind, the first part of this paper focuses on the foundation of the monastery of Theotokos Pammakaristos, its founders in the 12th century and re-founders in the late 13th–14th century. The former couple was Adrianos/Ioannes, the brother of Alexios I and Zoe/Anna, the daughter of Konstantinos X Doukas (r. 1059–1067), and the latter was Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotēs, a successful high military official, and Maria Palaiologina, a member of the extended family of the Palaiologoi.¹⁸ They represent the social groups that emerged as the most visible monastic founders in their respective periods. In the second part, other imperial and aristocratic figures will be included to demonstrate the changing profiles of patrons in Constantinople. In this picture, the interregnum period (1204–1261), in which there was a hiatus of foundation activities, can be perceived as a temporal turning point in the monastic topography of Constantinople. However, it will be seen that the trend of founding monasteries by lay individuals did not cease. On the contrary it gained popularity, accelerating in pace from the late 11th to the mid-14th century. It will also be suggested that the main factors behind specific groups emerging as major monastic patrons in Constantinople

15 Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum*, eds. Moritz Pinder and Theodor Büttner-Wobst, 3 vols (Bonn, 1841–1897), 3:766.

16 Paul Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 180ff.

17 Ibidem, "Medieval Constantinople," in *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Aldershot, 2007), I:78.

18 For Adrian, see Konstantinos Barzos, *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* 1 (Thessaloniki, 1984), no. 16, pp. 14–7; for Zoe, see Demetrios I. Polemis, *The Doukai, A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London, 1968), no. 20, pp. 54–5; for Michael and Maria, see Erich Trapp, Rainer Walther, Hans-Veit Beyer et al. ed., *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* (hereafter *PLP*) (Vienna, 1976–2001), nos. 27504 and 27511, respectively. For Maria and her family, see Vitalien Laurent, "Kyra Martha. Essai de topographie byzantine," *Échos d'Orient* 38 (1939), 296–320. cf. Arne Effenberger, "Zu den Eltern der Maria Dukaina Komnene Brannina Tarchaneiotissa," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 57 (2007), 169–82.

are closely related to the changes in the domestic policies of the state, especially kinship strategies and marriage arrangements.

2 Theotokos Pammakaristos Monastery: Foundation, Founders, Re-founders

In two 16th-century depictions, the Byzantine monastery dedicated to Theotokos Pammakaristos in the north-west of Constantinople, then housing the patriarchate under the Ottoman rule, was represented with the main building complex, a belfry, and other buildings along the monastic walls surrounding a courtyard on the northern and western sides.¹⁹ Today with only its *katholikon* (as Fethiye Camii), *parekklesion* (as Fethiye Museum), and the ambulatory surviving, it is still one of the better known monasteries in Constantinople. On the basis of its architecture (the so-called ambulatory type), masonry technique (use of recessed bricks), and decorative features (recessed arches), the initial construction of the main church is dated to the 11th/12th centuries.²⁰ The 13th–14th-century alterations began with the restoration of the monastery under Michael Glabas' patronage soon after the re-conquest of the capital (probably in the years following 1263).²¹ On the basis of a funerary mosaic in the *parekklesion*, depicting the couple in their secular garments and with their secular names, Michael the *protostrator* seems to have commissioned the funerary chapel and his tomb before his death as a monk in 1305/8.²² The apse mosaic and the poems of Manuel Philes refer to Maria as nun Martha and/or the *protostratorissa*. Therefore, the decorative program can be dated after her husband's death.²³ Lastly, another tomb with funerary epigrams was added to the *katholikon* during her years as a nun.²⁴

After 1453, the Pammakaristos monastery was chosen to house the patriarchate. Several additions and repairs took place both during this period and

19 Hans Belting, Cyril Mango and Doula Mouriki, eds. *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* (Washington, D.C., 1978), fig. 114.

20 Cyril Mango, "The Monument and its History," in *The Mosaics and Frescoes*, pp. 3–5.

21 Ibid, p. 12 and Arne Effenberger, "Zur Restaurierungstätigkeit des Michael Dukas Glabas Tarchaneioten im Pammakaristoskloster und zur Erbauungszeit des Parekklesions," *Zograf* 31 (2006–2007), 79–94.

22 Ibid, 91–2.

23 Manuel Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Emmanuel Miller (Paris, 1855) 1, n. 164, verses 26–7: ἡ πρωτοστράτορισα ταῦτα Μαρία / Κομνηνοφύης τῆ Κεχαριτωμενη.

24 Peter Schreiner, "Eine unbekannte Beschreibung der Pammakaristoskirche (Fethiye Camii) und weitere Textezur Topographie Konstantinopels," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 217–48, §2 (Schreiner's numbering).

when it was later converted into a mosque in 1587/88. In the 1950s, the then Byzantine Institute of America in Istanbul started a restoration project, during which several of the Ottoman/Turkish alterations were removed. While the *katholikon* remained a mosque, the *parekklesion*, including a part of the ambulatory, was converted into a museum. It is difficult to imagine how the main church would have looked upon its initial foundation in the 12th century. The viewer is left with a distorted picture of the complex: besides the main church building, there is a small courtyard, which was built on an artificial terrace, a common feature of Byzantine Constantinople, and was entered through a gate on the southern side of the *periphragmos*, as is depicted in 16th-century sketches.

Moving from the building itself to the founders, some pieces of *in situ* written evidence, when combined with poems commissioned for the monastery, other contemporary references to the founders, and later references in funerary epigrams, provide details about the founders' identities and backgrounds. First of all, a dedicatory epigram that is said to have once decorated the cornice of the bema of the main church, now lost, identifies a certain Ioannes Komnenos and his wife, Anna Doukaina, as the founders of the monastery.²⁵ Further details concerning this couple's children and grandchildren come from a list of tombs inside the *katholikon* and the *parekklesion*, preserved in a 16th-century manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge University.²⁶ Upon entering the *katholikon*, the epigrams on the first tomb on the right-hand side denote the names of a daughter of the founders, *sebaste* Eudokia, her daughter Anna Komnene, and son Ioannes.²⁷ Three sets of epigrams on three tombs located on the left-hand side, i.e. probably *arcosolia* on the northern wall of the *katholikon*, record two sons of the founders, *sebastos* Andronikos,²⁸ and *sebastos* Alexios,²⁹ who most probably took the monastic name Adrianos,³⁰ and definitely had a son named Adrianos.³¹

25 Quoted in Mango, "The Monument," p. 5: Ἰωάννου φρόντισμα Κομνηνοῦ τὸδε / Ἄννης τε
ρίξης Δουκικῆς τῆς συζύγου / Οἷς ἀντιδοῦσα πλουσίαν, ἀγνή, χάριν / Τάξαις ἐν οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ
μοιστρόπους.

26 MS. o.2.36, 145v-161r, edited with a commentary in Schreiner, "Eine unbekannte Beschreibung," 217–48.

27 Ibid, 221, §1.

28 Ibid, 223, §8.

29 Ibid, §10.

30 Ibid, 230. Schreiner identifies Adrianos the monk and Alexios, mentioned in §10 as sons of founders, separately. Cf. Mango, "The Monument," p. 8.

31 Schreiner, "Eine unbekannte Beschreibung," 223, §8 and §10.

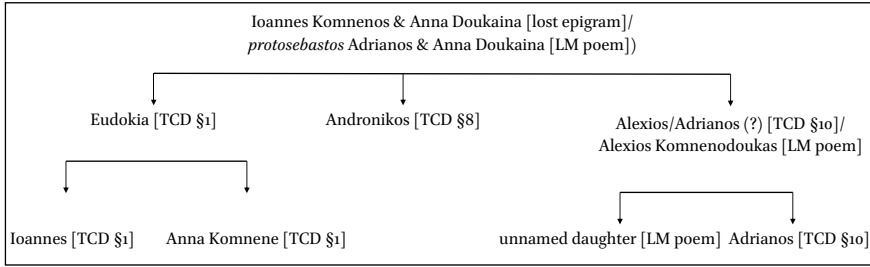


FIGURE 16.1 Simplified family tree of the founders of the Pammakaristos in the twelfth century. (TCD: Trinity College Document; LM poem: Poem of Leon Megistos) AUTHOR'S ILLUSTRATION.

Among many hypotheses for the historical identifications of Ioannes and Anna,³² Jean-Claude Cheynet and Jean-François Vannier suggest a strikingly similar lineage in a poem written by Leon Megistos for the widow of Georgios Palaiologos the *megas hetaireiarches*.³³ There Georgios' mother is mentioned to be a daughter of an Alexios Komnenodoukas, who himself was a son of *protosebastos* Adrianos and Anna (the monastic name of Zoe *porphyrogenetos*), the daughter of Konstantinos Doukas.³⁴ The key figure here is Alexios Komnenodoukas, who appears in the poem of Leon Megistos as the father of an unnamed granddaughter of Adrianos and Anna Doukaina and also in the 16th-century list of tombs as the son of the founders Ioannes Komnenos and Anna Doukaina. As Adrianos Komnenos is known to have taken the monastic name of Ioannes,³⁵ it is reasonable to identify Adrianos/Ioannes Komnenos,

32 Schreiner refrained from a historical identification. Most recently Stanković and Berger have suggested that Anna Dalassene and Ioannes Komnenos were Alexios I's parents, an argument first brought up by Xenophon A. Siderides but refuted by Mango. Schreiner, "Eine unbekannte Beschreibung," 221; Mango, "The Monument," p. 6; Stanković and Berger, "The Komnenoi," p. 14; Xenophon A. Siderides, "Περὶ τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μονῆς τῆς Παμμακαριστου καὶ τῶν κτιτόρων αὐτῆς," *Ἑλληνικός Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος* 29 (1907), 271–2.

33 Jean-Claude Cheynet and Jean-François Vannier, *Études prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), pp. 149–51.

34 Od. Lampsides, "Beitrag zur Biographie des Georgios Paläologos des Megas Hetäreiarches," *Byzantion* 40 (1970), 397, verses 153–59: ... πάππος γὰρ αὐτῷ Δουκοκομνηνος κλάδος / Ἀλέξιος παῖς Ἀδριανοῦ γεννάδα / πρώτου σεβαστῶν ἐσπέρας δομestίκου / Ἀλεξίου κρατοῦντος αὐ ὁμογνίου / Ἄννης τε μητρὸς αὐτάναξ ἦνπερ φύει / Κωνσταντίνος κράτιστος ἀλλ ἐν πορφύρα, / Δούκας... She is identified as *sebaste* Anna Doukaina of the Komnenoi. Cheynet and Vannier, *Études*, p. 151.

35 Bernard de Montfaucon, *Palaeographia Graeca* 1 (Paris, 1708), p. 47: μηνὶ Ἀπριλλίῳ ἰθ. ἡμέρᾳ δ. ἰνδ. γ'. ἐκοιμήθη ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ Ἀδριανός, ὥρα α τῆς ἡμέρας, ἔτοις σχιγ' μετονομασθεὶς ὁ Ἰωάννης μοναχός.

the brother of the emperor Alexios I, and Zoe/Anna Doukaina as the founders of the Pammakaristos monastery.³⁶

Adrianos Komnenos the *pansebastos* and *protosebastos*, as the brother of the emperor, was one of the core family members of the Komnenoi. He was appointed *meγas domestikos* of the west in the second half of the 1080s.³⁷ Although not much is known about Adrianos after the mid-1090s, he is recorded to have died as monk Ioannes in 1105 and commemorated in the *typikon* of the monastery of Christ Pantokrator as “the uncle of my majesty (Ioannes II’s) the *meγas domestikos*” without his name spelled out.³⁸ While all the family members named in the Trinity College list were thus remembered in the funerary inscriptions, the tombs in fact belong only to the founder’s three children, Eudokia *sebaste*, Andronikos Komnenos *sebastos*, and Alexios *sebastos*, and one grandchild, Adrianos *sebastos*. It appears that the rights of the foundations remained in the family descending through Alexios Komnenodoukas to his son Adrianos, as neither of the other named grandchildren (Anna and Ioannes) seems to have been buried there. At least three generations of burials of the same branch of the Komnenoi in the Pammakaristos suggest a strong family character of the foundation.³⁹

An inscription on the southern façade of the *parekklesion* records the name of Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotas as the founder of the Pammakaristos⁴⁰ and the epigram framing the apse mosaic in the same building reads the nun Martha offering the foundation on behalf of her husband the *protostrator* Michael Glabas.⁴¹ Manuel Philes, who composed no fewer than twenty poems for the Glabas couple, gives further details about the identity of his wife as he did for

36 Cf. Polemis, *Doukai*, pp. 154–5, n. 138. Alexios Palaiologos Komnenodoukas, especially see ft. 10.

37 Barzos, *Γενεαλογία* 1, pp. 114–7.

38 For a strong hypothesis about Adrianos’ disappearance from the state matters due to his probable role in the Diogenes plot, see Peter Frankopan, “Kinship and the Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium,” *English Historical Review* 122, no. 495 (2007), 19ff. Adrian’s commemoration on the *typikon* of the Pantokrator, see Paul Gautier, “Le *typikon* du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator,” *Revue des études byzantines* 32 (1974), 43, line 227.

39 Cf. Dimitri Kyritses, “The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries,” (PhD diss. Harvard University, 1997), pp. 238–47, especially 245–7.

40 Mango, “The Monument,” p. 21: Μιχαήλ Δούκας Γλαβᾶς Ταρχανειώτης ὁ πρωτοστράτωρ καὶ κτήτωρ.

41 Ibid., p. 21: Ὑπὲρ Μιχαήλ τοῦ Γλαβᾶ τοῦ συζύγου / ὅς ἦν ἀριστεύς [κᾶ]ντιμος πρωτοστράτωρ / Μάρθας μοναχῆς τῷ θεῷ σώστρον τόδε.

Maria Komnene Palaiologina Branaina Doukaina.⁴² The Trinity College document describes the couple's tomb on the northern wall of the *parekklesion*, naming both as the founders of the monastery.⁴³ In addition to the Pammakaristos, both as a couple and individually, Michael and Maria are known to have commissioned many public and/or charitable buildings, including a hospital, several fortresses in Thrace, a monastery in Sozopolis, and the chapel of Hagios Euthymios next to Hagios Demetrios in Thessalonike.⁴⁴ Michael is also known to have founded the monastery of Atheniotissa at an unknown location in Constantinople and Maria, then taking the monastic name of Martha, to have founded the monastery named after herself, of the Glabaina, in close proximity to a similar foundation, the monastery of the Theotokos of Bebaia Elpis.⁴⁵

Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotes climbed up the hierarchy eventually to hold the second highest ranking military office, *protostrator*. He was married to Maria, who was a Palaiologina and emphasised her ties to the Komnenoi.⁴⁶ While the ambivalence of her family background suggests that she might not be a close relative of the emperor, she still had a higher social standing than her husband's. She also appears on the Trinity College list as Maria Doukaina Brabrainia [Branaina] Palaiologina Tarchaneiotissa, the nun Martha among eight other names – the founder Nikolaos/monk Neilos Komnenos Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotes the *megas papias*, his wife Theodora/nun Theodosia, a son of the founder, Konstantinos/Kyrillios Komnenos Doukas Tarchaneiotes the *megas papias*, and his daughter Eudokia Doukaina.⁴⁷ Considering the symmetrical composition of the funerary epigram, Arne Effenberger argues that Maria/Martha can be identified as their daughter – though the family's

42 ἡ πρωτοστρατόρισσα ταῦτα Μαρία / Κομνηνοφύης τῆ Κεχαριτωμενη; Manuel Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Emmanuel Miller (Paris, 1855) I, n. 164, verses 26–7; “Κομνηνοφύης ἡ Παλαιολογίνα,” Manuel Philes, *Carmina Inedita*, ed. Al. Martini (1900), 65, n. 54. and “Βράναινα καὶ Δούκαινα,” Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Miller, I, 54, line 33.

43 Schreiner, “Eine unbekannte Beschreibung,” 222, §4.

44 Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Miller, 240ff., no. 237; Mango, “The Monument,” p. 14; Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn, 1829–1855) I, p. 484.

45 Albert Failler, “Pachymeriana altera. Deux problèmes concernant l’Histoire de Georges Pachymères sont traités,” *Revue des Études Byzantines* 46 (1988), 80; Alice-Mary Talbot, trans., “Bebaia Elpis: Typikon of Theodora Synadene for the Convent of the Mother of God Bebaia Elpis in Constantinople,” in *BMFD*, pp. 1512–78.

46 “ταῦτα κρατούντος ἐξαδέλφη καλλιπαις” Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Miller, I, 172, line 41. Laurent suggests that she must be a cousin of Andronikos II. Vitalien Laurent, “Kyra Martha,” 301–5. cf. Effenberger, “Zu den Eltern,” 169–82.

47 Schreiner, “Eine unbekannte Beschreibung,” 222, §2.

connection to the emperor could not be clarified.⁴⁸ Further emphasis on family in the 14th-century Pammakaristos can perhaps be observed in the way in which a certain Alexios Tarchaneiotos, who was married to the *sebaste* Eudokia in the 12th century – the daughter of the founders – was commemorated in a funerary epigram in the *katholikon*. While there is no conclusive evidence to tie the two to the same branch of the Tarchaneiotai, it could be also an imagined familial continuity.

Having analysed the 12th – and 13th/14th-century founders of the Pammakaristos, the following points emerge: (1) In both periods, the male founders held high military office. (2) In the 12th-century case, the founder was a member of the inner imperial family and his 13th-century counterpart married into the extended imperial family. (3) Both female founders were members of the imperial family, though the 12th-century foundress was the daughter of the previous emperor while the 14th-century foundress might have been a distant relative of Andronikos II. (4) The monastery had a function of family burial and commemoration. To those familiar with Constantinopolitan monastic foundations, these points might seem rather generic from the late 11th century onwards. However, other known monastic foundation activities, discussed in the proceeding section, throw its nuances into sharper relief.

3 Contextualizing the Pammakaristos Case: Changing Monastic Foundation Activities from the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi

While it was not a novelty that many Byzantines, especially those who belonged to the imperial family and the aristocracy, founded religious institutions in the city, the tendency of founding monasteries at the expense of churches, already accelerated in the early 10th century, became the preferred form of monumental religious patronage during the long 12th century and peaked in the early Palaiologan period.⁴⁹ The first recorded monastic foundation activity of the Komnenian era was the restoration of the Chora monastery by Maria of Bulgaria around 1081 in close proximity to the Blachernai palace in the north-west,⁵⁰ who was followed by the other empress-mother, Anna Dalassene, when she founded the monastery of Christ Pantepoptes before

48 Effenberger, “Zu den Eltern,” 177ff.

49 Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries*, pp. 257–63; Magdalino, “Medieval Constantinople,” 1. pp. 27–31.

50 Paul Underwood, *The Kariye Camii* 1 (Princeton, 1966), pp. 8–13.

1087.⁵¹ Empress Eirene Doukaina founded the Kecharitomene, which was adjacent to the monastery of Christ Philanthropos – her husband, the emperor's, foundation – and she also received a small nunnery, *ta Kellaraias*, from Patriarch Nikolaos III *grammatikos* (1084–1111) in the same area.⁵² Alexios I Komnenos' grand project, the Orphanotropheion on the ancient acropolis, also hosted monastic communities⁵³ and he was briefly mentioned together with his son Ioannes II (r. 1118–1143) and grandson Manuel I (r. 1143–1180) as a patron of the monastery of Mokios in the south-western part of the city.⁵⁴ Emperor Ioannes II, together with Empress Piroška-Eirene, commissioned the grand imperial monastery of Christ Pantokrator.⁵⁵ On the other hand, having opposed founding monasteries in Constantinople, Emperor Manuel I founded the monastery of Archangel Michael Kataskepe on the northern Bosphorus.⁵⁶ However, his reason for not following many examples set by his own family might be different, as he already had the Pantokrator monastery – his father's dynastic foundation – at his service in the capital. He was later buried in its mausoleum (the church of Archangel Michael) together with his first wife Bertha of Sulzbach. After Manuel's death, his second wife, Empress Maria of Antioch, founded the monastery of Theotokos Pantanassa in the easternmost part of the city away from the Komnenian core.⁵⁷

In addition to this picture, in which the empresses and empress-mothers emerge as the prime monastic patrons along with Alexios and Ioannes' ambitious foundations, there were other monastic founders among the imperial family: during Alexios I's reign, his brother Adrianos and Zoe (Pammakaristos) and his nephew Ioannes Komnenos the *protosebastos* (the monastery

51 Janin and Kidonopoulos identify the Pantepoptes as Eski İmaret Camii. See *Les églises*, pp. 513–5; *Bauten*, 28–30; cf. Cyril Mango, "Where at Constantinople was the Monastery of Christos Pantepoptes?" *Δελτίον ΧΑΕ* 20 (1998), 87–8. Mango argues that *Pantepoptes* must have stood where the Sultan Selim Camii stands today. For the patronage of Anna Dalassene, see Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (London, 1999), pp. 161–5.

52 Gautier, "Kécharitoménè," 19–147, for *ta Kellaraias*, 115; Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 188–91, 225–7; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991) s. v. "Irene Doukaina" empress 1081–1118.

53 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 15.7.8–9, eds. Reinsch and Kambylis, p. 217.

54 *Codex Marc gr.* 1524 fol. 46^r cited in Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 226–7.

55 For the latest thorough study on Pantokrator, see Sofia Kotzabassi, ed. *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Boston, 2013).

56 Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H.J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1984), pp. 117–8.

57 Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 215–6.

of Euergetes in the north-west);⁵⁸ during the reign of Ioannes II, his brother, Isaakios the *sebastokrator*, was involved in the restoration of the Chora, prior to his foundation of the Kosmosoteira.⁵⁹ Lastly, at an unknown date, a grandson of Alexios I founded the monastery of Botaneiates.⁶⁰ It seems indisputable that the high density of the kin members' patronage in a particular area of the capital is connected to changes in the administrative structure of the state. Already mentioned above, the Komnenian kin were elevated to the top stratum of the state, especially under Alexios I's rule. However, they still had to prove their high social status and gain and re-gain it from one generation to the next.⁶¹ To this end, monastic foundations, tangible proof of one's piety and good reputation, also became a way to visually strengthen and emphasise one's Komnenian-ness.

The density of Komnenian foundations in the north-west may seem to construct a sort of unified Komnenian district within the city. However, since close geographical relationships between foundations does not necessarily equate to similarly close relationships between aristocratic founders or ruling emperors, this unified image of the ruling clan can be deceiving. Indeed, several founders are known to have been on bad terms with each other.⁶² For instance, concerning the dissent between Anna Dalassene and Eirene Doukaina, the Kecharitomene *typikon* gives a hint about Eirene's feelings, when the empress does not name Anna Dalassene among the select relatives of the couple, who were all named, to be commemorated. It is also evident in the way in which Isaakios Komnenos the *sebastokrator*, brother of emperor Ioannes II, explains how he founded the monastery of Theotokos Kosmosoteira in Thrace after giving up his plans to be buried in the Chora monastery, and deliberately excluded his family except his parents from the commemorative services in the Kosmosoteira.⁶³ Besides Isaakios, it is intriguing to note that the other two

58 Barzos, *Γενεαλογία* 1, pp. 114–7, no. 23; Berge Aran, “The Church of Saint Theodosia and the Monastery of Christ Euergetes. Notes on the topography of Constantinople,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 28 (1979), 211–28.

59 Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, trans. “*Kosmosoteira: Typikon of the Sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos for the Monastery of the Mother of God Kosmosoteira near Bera*,” in *BMFD*, pp. 782–858.

60 Bryennios, *Commentarii*, ed. Augustus Meineke (Bonn, 1836), 124–5; Janin, *Les églises*, p. 66.

61 Michael Angold, “Introduction,” *Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*, ed. Michael Angold (Oxford, 1984), pp. 1–9.

62 Vlada Stanković and Albrecht Berger, “The Komnenoi and Constantinople before the Building of the Pantokrator,” in *Pantokrator Monastery*, pp. 3–32.

63 Ševčenko, *op. cit.* (above, n. 60). For similar examples, see Frankopan, “Kinship and the Distribution of Power,” 1–34 and Stanković and Berger, “Komnenoi and Constantinople,” p. 24.

close relatives of the emperor who are known as monastic patrons at the capital, Adrianos and Ioannes Komnenos, were also involved in plots against the ruling emperor.

In addition to promoting their kin to high positions in the army, another political strategy of the Komnenian emperors was to include prominent aristocratic families in the ruling clan through marriage alliances. After all, what brought Alexios I to the Byzantine throne was a Komneno–Doukas alliance, realised by Eirene Doukaina and Alexios I's marriage. The marriage of Adrianos Komnenos and Zoe Doukaina *porphyrogennetos* is another example of the alliance between the two families. During Alexios' reign, Georgios Palaiologos, who was married to Anna Doukaina, sister of Eirene Doukaina, and thus became a *gambros* of the emperor, also appeared as a monastic founder with his foundation of the monastery of Hagios Demetrios in the southern part of the city.⁶⁴ Later under Manuel's rule, Georgios' grandson, the *sebastos* and *megas hetaireiarches* Georgios Komnenos Palaiologos, restored the monastery of the Theotokos Hodegetria.⁶⁵

On the other hand, while members of the lower aristocracy, civil servants, and other lay people are known to have founded monasteries in the city in the previous periods, no such figure was recorded in the sources as a monastic patron at the capital in the first half century of the Komnenian rule. Yet, as the 12th century unfolded, people such as Ioannes Ioalites, a *protasekretis* at Ioannes II's court (the Petra monastery), a certain Andronikos Rogerios (Theotokos Chrysokamarotissa), and Georgios Kappadokes the *mystikos* at Manuel I's court (Hagios Mamas), as well as people from humbler backgrounds like the father of Gregorios Antiochos (Hagios Basileios) were also able to found monasteries at the capital.⁶⁶ The lower strata of society is invisible in the sources as monastic founders in the first half century of the Komnenian rule, because their role as founders represents a manifestation of the emperor's reliance on people from outside his immediate family. This reliance grew over time, as rivalry within the clan increased, peaking during Manuel's reign.

64 George Dennis, trans., "*Kellibara I: Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios of the Palaiologoi-Kellibara in Constantinople*," in *BMFD*, p. 1247; Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 92–4.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 199–207. Polemis, *Doukai*, pp. 155–6, n. 139, especially ft. 5.

66 Paul Magdalino, "The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. Sergei Hackel (New York, 2001), pp. 52; Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 242, 314–9, 59–60, respectively. There are only two other monastic foundations recorded in this period: Monk Nikolaos, later to become Patriarch Nikolaos III *grammatikos*, founded the monastery of Kyr Nikolaos in the south-western part of the city and John the Faster restored the Petra monastery, with the patronage of Anna Dalassene.

The high number of monastic foundation activities – no fewer than thirty-nine monasteries – in the early Palaiologan period can be considered as a natural and organic response to the period of Latin rule in Constantinople (1204–1261).⁶⁷ Pachymeres notes that it was one of Michael VIII Palaiologos' (r. 1259–1282) priorities (after re-populating the city) to reinstate the monasteries to their former glory:

[...] he [Michael VIII] also offered up other extremely fertile land to the monasteries. For it was his aim to make them the equal of the monasteries outside, the ones standing in the East in great numbers that had abundant riches and a sufficiency of necessities; and so he intended to set these monasteries up through such measures. [...] But most urgent, and the greatest, task was to help the monasteries return to their former appearance, and to rebuild the city [...]⁶⁸

During the period 1261–1328, the monastic foundations, mostly but not always restorations and re-foundations, spread over the city without a specific core district to be associated with any social groups, including the imperial family. For instance, Michael VIII re-founded the monastery of Hagios Georgios at Mangana in the easternmost end of the peninsula, Hagios Demetrios in the southern part and the Peribleptos in the south-west.⁶⁹ Andronikos (II), then as the co-emperor, restored the Nea Mone to the north-east of the Boukoleon palace and, after Michael's death as emperor, restored the twelfth-century foundation of Pantepoptes in the north-west.⁷⁰ While his two sons, Bartholomaios/Atouemes and Ioannes the *despotes*, re-founded the monasteries of Euergetes and Prodromos of the Palaiologos, respectively,⁷¹ his mother, dowager empress

67 Alice-Mary Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), 243–61. Vassilios Kidonopoulos, "The Urban Physiognomy of Constantinople from the Latin Conquest through the Palaiologan Era," in *Faith and Power (1261–1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, ed. Sarah T. Brooks (New York, 2006), pp. 98–117.

68 Georgios Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques* 1, ed. Albert Failler and trans. Vitalien Laurent (Paris, 1984), 2.33, pp. 221, 223; English trans. quoted in Nathan John Cassidy, "A Translation and Historical Commentary of Book One and Book Two of the *Historia* of Georgios Pachymeres," (PhD diss. University of Western Australia, 2004), pp. 80–1.

69 *PLP* no. 21528; Kidonopoulos, *Bauten*, pp. 37–9, 91–3.

70 Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 361–5. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten*, pp. 28–30, 56–9.

71 Concerning Bartholomaios, *PLP* no. 1641 mentions him only as a monk related to the imperial house. Kidonopoulos suggests that he might have been the son of Andronikos II and his second wife, Eirene-Yolanda, as the imperial couple had a son named Bartholomaios. *Bauten*, pp. 25–8.

Theodora Palaiologina, re-founded the monasteries of Lips and Hagioi Anargyroi.⁷² The Lips monastery, known from its surviving *typikon*, was apparently meant to function as a dynastic burial place, just like the Pantokrator in the 12th century.⁷³

Michael VIII promoted his siblings to establish and consolidate the power of the Palaiologan clan at critical times after his usurpation.⁷⁴ While they made several marriage alliances with important aristocratic families like the Tornikai, Branades, Tarchaneiotai, and Kantakouzenoi, none among this first generation chose, or was allowed, to found a monastery in Constantinople. The exception is Michael's sister Maria, taking the monastic name of Martha, who founded the monastery known as Kyra Martha in the first years after the reconquest.⁷⁵ This period of inertia in aristocratic monastic patronage seems rather due to Michael's fierce and highly controversial religious and political policies, especially concerning Church Union, and the accompanying persecution of the opposition, among whom there were many monastics as well as future monastic patrons.⁷⁶ Beside the emperor and co-emperor, in this period it is telling that the only other monastic patrons at the capital were Georgios Akropolites (the monastery of Anastasis) and Germanos III Gabras Markoutzas (who built the monks' cells in the Mangana), two figures who personally attended the Council of Lyons in 1274.⁷⁷

In contrast, there was an unprecedented level of attention to the monastic foundations during Andronikos' sole rule (r. 1282–1328).⁷⁸ While his brother Konstantinos *porphyrogenetos* re-founded the Stoudios monastery, their half-sister Maria/Melane Palaiologina, after having returned from the Ilkhanate to Constantinople upon the death of her husband Abaqa Khan, bought properties from the Akropolites family to be converted into her monastery

72 *PLP* no. 21380; Alice-Mary Talbot, "Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992), 295–303.

73 Alice-Mary Talbot, trans. "Lips: *Typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Lips in Constantinople," in *BMFD*, pp. 1254–86.

74 Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques* 1, Failler and Laurent (Paris, 1984), 3.16, pp. 271–5.

75 *PLP* no. 21389; Laurent, "Kyra Martha," 296–305.

76 Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282, A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 264–76.

77 Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques* 2, Failler and Laurent (Paris, 1984), 5.17, p. 493. For Germanos, *PLP* no. 17091.

78 Alice-Mary Talbot, "Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries," in *Byzantine Constantinople*, pp. 329–43.

of Theotokos Panagiotissa.⁷⁹ Moreover, (strikingly only female) members of the extended family appear in Constantinople as monastic patrons in this period during Andronikos' rule, who actually constitute the second generation of the matches that Michael VIII arranged to consolidate an extended aristocratic clan (i.e. cousins of Andronikos).⁸⁰ Theodora Raoulaina the *protobestiaria*, a cousin of Andronikos II, who was wed to Georgios Mouzalon first and then Ioannes Raoul the *protobestiarios*, having returned to the capital in 1282, founded the monasteries of Hagios Andreas in Krisei and Aristine.⁸¹ The monastery of the Theotokos of Bebaia Elpis was founded by another cousin of Andronikos II, Theodora Synadene, and later remained in the hands of her daughter Euphrosyne.⁸² Anna Komnene Raoulaina Strategopoulina, Michael Strategopoulos' wife and probably Theodora Raoulaina's daughter, founded the monastery of Christ Krataios.⁸³ Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, Michael VIII's sister Eirene/Eulogia's daughter, founded a monastery known as that of the *megale domestikissa*.⁸⁴ Lastly, as seen above, Maria/Martha Palaiologina Tarchaneiotissa was involved in restoration of the Pammakaristos, as well as founding another monastery, that of Glabaina, after her husband's death.

For these women, who were all relatives of the emperor and married into high aristocratic families, a monastery could provide what they needed most. They could retire to their monasteries to spend their remaining years after their husbands' deaths; they kept their names known and remembered through their monasteries as monuments in the city, and within the monastic establishments through prayers and intercessions for their souls.⁸⁵ For these women of considerably high social status, who, however, had very limited public roles, building a monastery established their piety and contributed to their reputation in society.⁸⁶ Also, it seems that monasteries functioned as a stage

79 For Maria, *PLP* no. 21395. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten*, pp. 19–25, 88–90; Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 195–6, 213–4.

80 Niels Gaul, "All the Emperor's men (and his nephews): Paideia and networking strategies at the Court of Andronikos II Palaiologos, 1290–1320," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 70 (2017), 245–70.

81 *PLP* no. 10943. Alexander Riehle, "Καί σε προστάτιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιγράφομεν σωτηρίας, Theodora Raulina als Stifterin und Patronin," in *Female Founders*, pp. 299–315.

82 Talbot, trans., "Bebaia Elpis," pp. 1525–6.

83 Failler, "Pachymeriana altera," pp. 68–75; Kidonopoulos, *Bauten*, pp. 36–7; *PLP* no. 26893.

84 Manuel Philes, *Carmina*, ed. Emmanuel Miller (Paris, 1855) II, n. 172, pp. 81f; *PLP* no. 21368.

85 It was a phenomenon in Byzantium that women became patrons of charitable organizations, monasteries, and the arts after they were widowed and held the property rights to their dowry, and morning gifts. See Angeliki Laiou, *Women, Family and Society in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2011), especially pp. 11.122–60 and V.51–75.

86 Liz James, "Making a Name," in *Female Founders*, pp. 63–4.

where they could express their views on contemporary religious disputes or politics. Theodora Raoulaina is an illuminating case in this matter. Not only did she make arrangements to transfer the relics of Patriarch Arsenios to her monastery of Hagios Andreas in Krisei, but she also restored the Aristine to accommodate the then deposed patriarch Gregorios of Cyprus.⁸⁷

Like their Komnenian counterparts, several male members of the aristocracy with important military duties became monastic patrons in Constantinople. Konstantinos Doukas Nestongos the *parakoimomenos tes spendones* founded the monastery of Hagios Stephanos the protomartyr.⁸⁸ Perhaps the most illustrious (and most high profile) of them is the *protostrator* Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotos with his foundations of the Atheniotissa and Pammakaristos.

The Palaiologan emperors continued to benefit from marital arrangements; however, in the time of Andronikos II there seems to have been a novelty in domestic marriage alliances. Andronikos II arranged marriages between the male members of his family and the daughters of the urban elite in his service, as in the cases of Nikephoros Choumnos, Konstantinos Akropolites, and Theodoros Metochites.⁸⁹ The members of the urban elite in question did not belong to the high aristocracy by birth but were included through their service and strengthened their high status with such marriages.⁹⁰ These learned men enjoyed the emperor's favour, which also explains their sudden appearance as monastic patrons at the capital. Choumnos founded the monastery of the Theotokos Gorgoepekoos, Georgios and Konstantinos Akropolites founded the Anastasis, and Metochites had the honour to re-found an imperial monastery, the Chora. However, the marriages of their daughters seem to have empowered their fathers rather than the women themselves. Only Choumnos' daughter Eirene/Eulogia, who was married to Andronikos' son Ioannes the *despotes*, founded the monastery of Christ Philanthropos Soter.⁹¹ Her case is exceptional in many aspects: she was married to a son of the emperor; she kept her family name of Palaiologina and imperial title *basilissa* after her husband's untimely

87 Riehle, "Καί σε προστάτιν," pp. 299–315.

88 Janin, *Les églises*, pp. 477.

89 Gaul, "All the Emperor's Men," pp. 250–6. Moreover, there are three cases where the founder is unknown (the monasteries of Myrelaion, Agios Nikolaos *tes opaines*, and Theotokos Hyperagnos). For Phokas Maroules the *domestikos*, who founded a monastery near the gate of Agios Romanos, and Ioannes/Ioannikios Kanaboures, who founded a monastery most probably in Constantinople at an unknown location, the evidence is too limited to interpret family lineages.

90 Ibid.

91 Hero, "Irene-Eulogia," 119–47.

death; she founded a monastery to host a hundred nuns, by far the largest monastic foundation of her times.⁹²

4 Conclusion

This survey shows that founding monasteries had always been a trend, as is exemplified by the Pammakaristos monastery and amplified by more than 51 cases. Several changes in this trend, albeit not as dramatic as clear turning points, are noteworthy: The profile of the founders changed from the late-11th to early-14th centuries, from primarily imperial family members, such as Adrianos Komnenos, to increasingly visible female relatives and in-laws of the emperor, such as Maria and Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotos. The patronage of the close Komnenian family members significantly contributed to the image of the north-western part of the city as the Komnenian core, where the Pammakaristos was located close to other Komnenian foundations, such as the Pantepoptes, Philanthropos, Kecharitomene, Euergetes, and Pantokrator. By contrast, the inner imperial family of the Palaiologoi, perhaps because of their insufficient finances, and perhaps because of the elevated status of the high aristocracy and intermingling of this group with the urban elite, shared the monastic cityscape with others. The emperor became just one among many monastic patrons, neither the most ambitious, nor the wealthiest. At that time, it was almost a collective act to turn Constantinople into a Byzantine city again, without any identifiable core areas for monastic patronage.

Mirroring the role of the emperor, the empress was the pious foundress of the Komnenian century, when founding highly expensive urban aristocratic monasteries was still largely dominated by men. Yet, in the Palaiologan period, the increasing appearance of female blood-relatives and in-laws of the emperor reveals how the marriage arrangements, meant to strengthen the authority of the emperor and imperial power, resulted in empowering all those who partook in such arrangements. Monastic patronage, thus, diffused vertically (and downwards) to a broader spectrum of society: not only wives and mothers of the emperor but also the female cousins and their daughters; not only the highest ranking military men but also lower-ranking ones founded monasteries.

It is clear that founding monasteries was considered as a prestigious deed, an urban foundation to provide the individual with visibility and reputation. Choniates gives some inside information about what he calls “the excessive

92 Adele Stolfi, “La biografia di Irene-Eulogia Cumnena Paleologhina (1291–1355): Un Riesame,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 20 (1999), 1–40. Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 1, p. 238.

desire of most to build monasteries,⁹³ to be more specific Constantinopolitan monasteries in the 12th century:

For it was fitting that monks should set up their habitation in out-of-the-way places and desolate areas, in hollow caves and on mountain tops, and that they avoid this fair City [...] But some monks sought the praise of men and set up their whited sepulchres in full view of those entering the churches, and, even when dead, they desired to depict themselves as crowned in victory and with cheerful and bright countenances. They built their holy monasteries in the marketplace and at the crossroads and confined themselves to these as though in caves.⁹⁴

This passage, referring to Manuel I Komnenos' policies towards monasticism, also sheds some light on the motivations of other founders: they wanted to be remembered and to be seen in Constantinople. In a parallel passage from the Palaiologan period, Gregoras finds pride in commissioning new foundations:

[...] For there is a certain malign influence which seems to insinuate itself, persuading <men> to allow the buildings constructed long ago to fall into ruin, so that as the memory of their builders flows away and dies together with the buildings, the new structures remain, clearly articulating the memory of the one who established them [...]⁹⁵

The long tradition of monastic foundations in Constantinople continued at an accelerated pace until the first decades of the 14th century, after which, in striking contrast, only very limited monumental patronage can be observed in the capital. And the building activity in the city after c.1340 was not either commissioned by imperial couples, or included monasteries. The monasteries continued to be an integral part of the cityscape in the last century of Byzantium, but those people whom Gregoras criticizes had to find other media to leave their names behind.

93 Choniates, *Annals*, p. 117.

94 *Ibid.*, 118.

95 Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, I, p. 274. Translation quoted in Talbot, "Building Activity," p. 331.

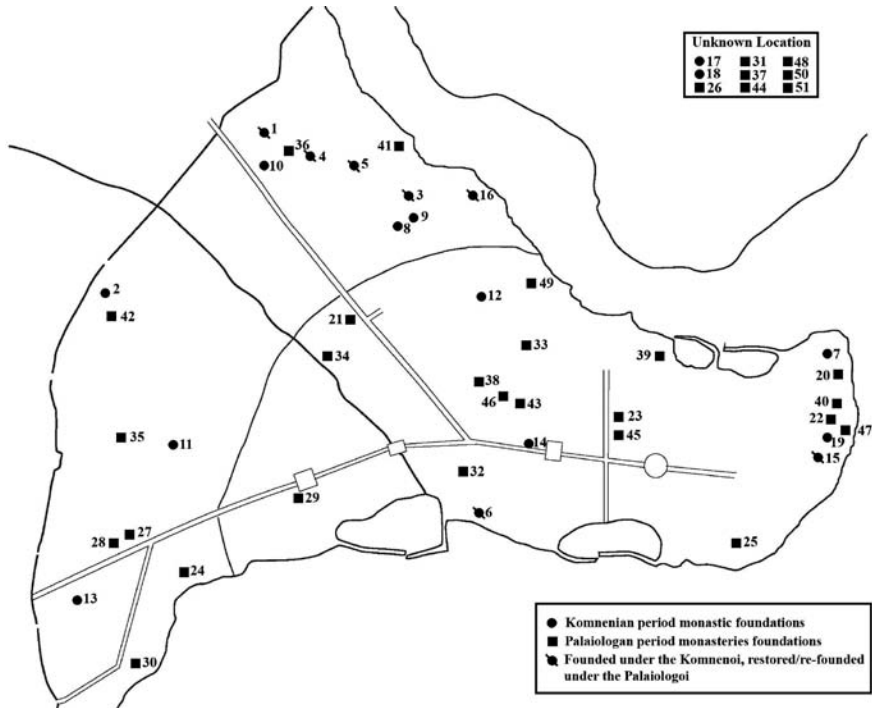


FIGURE. 16.2 Monastic foundations in Constantinople (1081–1185 and 1261–1328). 1. *Chora* 2. *Prodromos of Nikolaos* 3. *Pantepoptes* 4. *Petra* 5. *Pammakaristos* 6. *Hagios Demetrios* 7. *of the Iberians (Orphanotropheion)* 8. *Kecharitomenē* 9. *Philanthropos* 10. *ta Kellaraias* 11. *Hagios Mokios* 12. *Pantokrator* 13. *Hagios Mamas* 14. *Hagios Basileios* 15. *Hodegetria* 16. *Euergetes* 17. *Botaneiates* 18. *Chrysokamarotissa* 19. *Pantanassa* 20. *Hagios Nikolaos* 21. *Kyra Martha* 22. *Mangana* 23. *Anastasis* 24. *Peribleptos* 25. *Nea Mone* 26. *Pertze* 27. *Hagios Andreas in Krisei* 28. *Aristine* 29. *Xerolophos* 30. *Stoudios* 31. *Atheniotissa* 32. *Myrelaion* 33. *Bebaia Elpis* 34. *Lips* 35. *Hagios Anargyroi* 36. *Hagios Nikolaos (tes opaines)* 37. *Prodromos of Palaiologos* 38. *Gorgoepekoos* 39. *Kyr Antonios* 40. *Krataios* 41. *Panagiotissa* 42. *of Phokas Maroules the domestikos* 43. *Kyriotissa* 44. *of Ioannes Kanaboures* 45. *of Nikandros the hieromonk* 46. *of Glabaina* 47. *Philanthropos Soter* 48. *of megale domestikissa* 49. *Hagios Stephanos the protomartyr* 50. *Hyperagnos* 51. *of megale Doukaina*
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